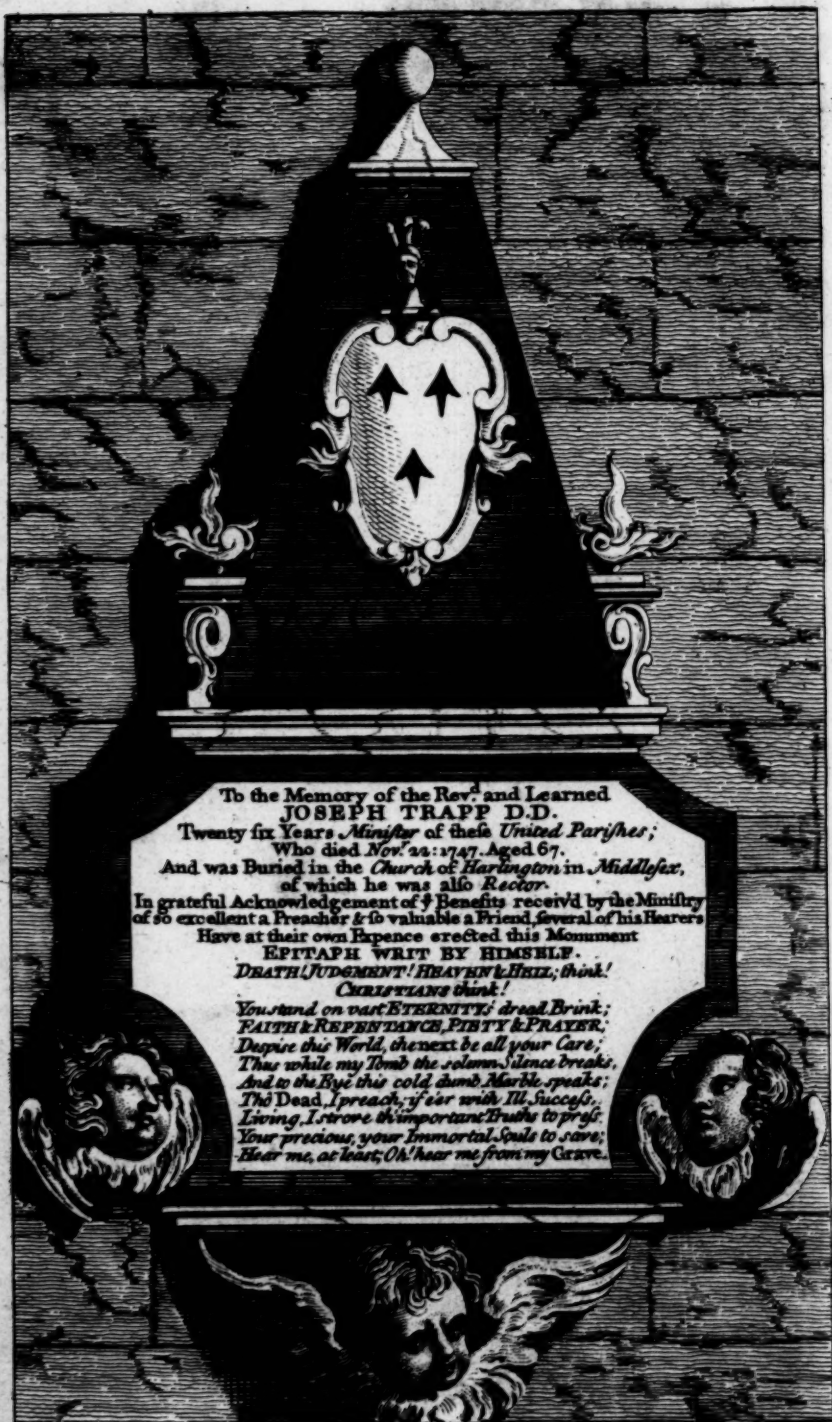


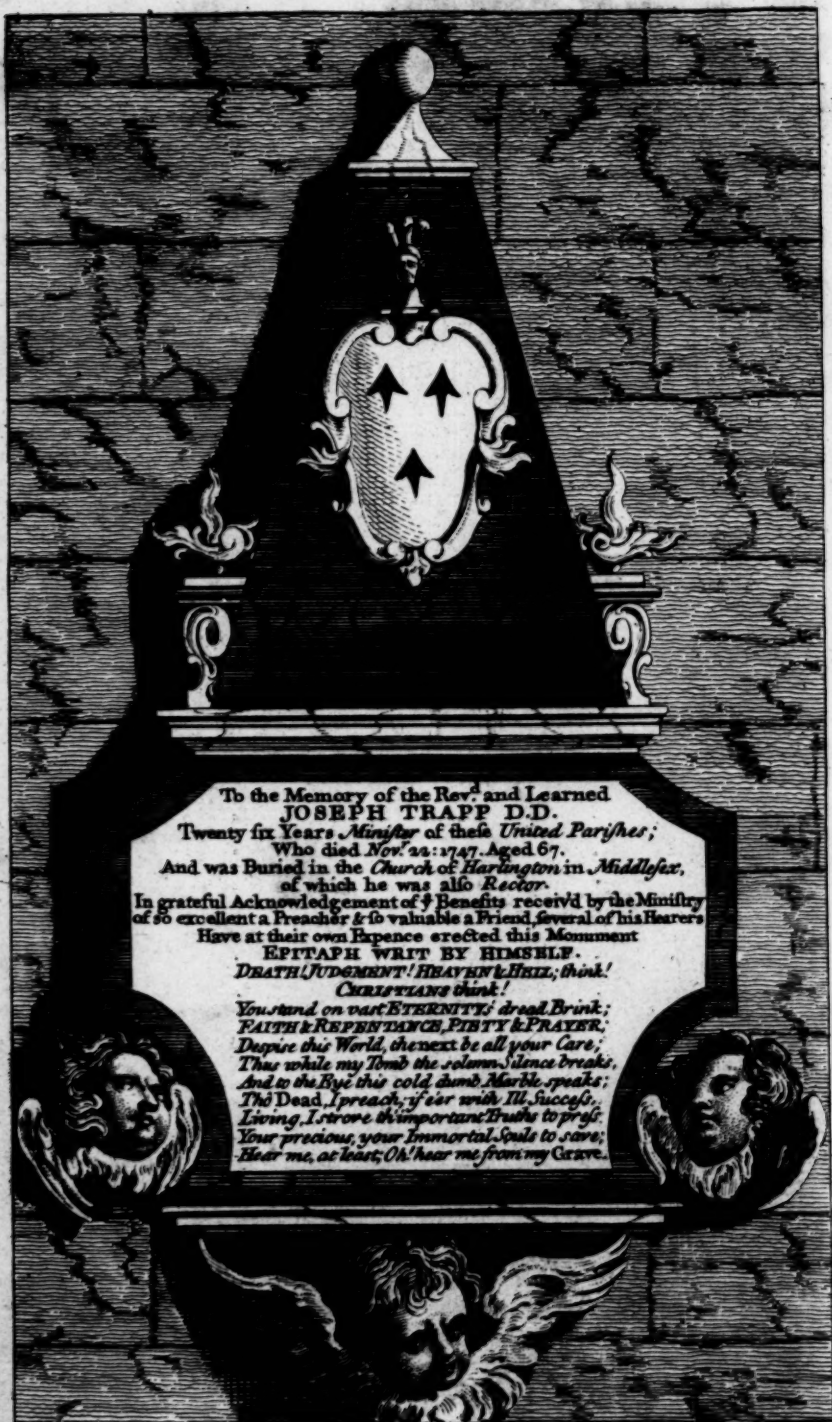


To the Memory of the Rev.^d and Learned
JOSEPH TRAPP D.D.
Twenty six Years Minister of these United Parishes;
Who died Nov^r 22: 1747. Aged 67.
And was Buried in the Church of Harlington in Middlesex,
of which he was also Rector.
In grateful Acknowledgement of $\frac{1}{2}$ Benefits receivd by the Ministry
of so excellent a Preacher & so valuable a Friend, several of his Hearers
Have at their own Expence erected this Monument

EPITAPH WRIT BY HIMSELF.

DEATH! JUDGMENT! HEAVEN & HELL; think!
CHRISTIANS think!

*You stand on vast ETERNITY's dread Brink;
FAITH & REPENTANCE, PITY & PRAYER;
Despise this World, the next be all your Care;
Thus while my Tomb the solemn Silence breaks,
And to the Bye this cold dumb Marble speaks;
Thou Dead, I preach, if e'er with Ill Success;
Living, I strove th' important Truths to preſe;
Your precious, your Immortal Souls to save;
Hear me, at least; Oh! hear me from my Grave.*



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Gal 10 O C

SERMONS

ON

MORAL and PRACTICAL

SUBJECTS.

By the late Rev. JOSEPH TRAPP, D. D.

*Rector of Harlington in Middlesex, and Vicar
of the United Parishes of Christ-Church and
St. Leonard's, Foster-Lane, London.*

Publish'd, as design'd by the Author for the Press,

By JOSEPH TRAPP, M. A.
Rector of Stratfield-Sea and Stratfield-Turgis, Hants.

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MDCC LII.

4

SERMONS

ON

THE HOLY TRINITY

SUBJECTS



Printed by C. Nicholson, and sold by S. East in
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MDCCLXII

TO THOSE WORTHY
C I T I Z E N S,
WHO BY ERECTING THIS MONUMENT
HAVE SHEWN AN UNEXAMPLED INSTANCE
OF THEIR REGARD
TO PRIMITIVE PIETY AND VIRTUE,
TO SOLID LEARNING,
TO UNTAINTED INTEGRITY,
TO TRULY CHRISTIAN SIMPLICITY;
THIS PLATE
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

By their Obliged

and Humble Servant,

J. TRAPP.

TO THOSE WORTHY

CITIZENS

WHO BY ERECTING THIS MONUMENT

HAVE GIVEN AN UNBROKEN LINK

OF THEIR REGARD

TO PRIMITIVE PIETY AND VIRTUE

TO SOLID LEARNING

TO UNDAUNTED INTEGRITY

TO TRULY CHRISTIAN SIMPLICITY

THIS PLATE

IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

By their Obedient

and Grateful Servants

J. TRAPP.

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*From that Time many of his Disciples went
back, and walked no more with him.*

*Then said Jesus unto the Twelve, Will ye also
go away?*

*Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to
whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of
eternal Life.* 299, 317.

S E R M O N

SERMON I.

The Necessity of being Religious in all Ages of Life, particularly in YOUTH.

The First Sermon on this Subject.

ECCLES. XII. I.

Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth; while the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no Pleasure in them.

IT is the general Opinion of learned SERM. I.
Men, and indeed appears plainly enough
from the Book itself, that this excel-
lent miscellaneous Treatise of Moral and
VOL. II. B Divine

SERM. Divine Philosophy, the Book of *Ecclesiastes*,

I. was written by *Solomon* in his old Age, after his shameful Lapse into Idolatry, and his happy Recovery from it: For that he *did* recover, and die a sincere Penitent, was the standing Belief and Tradition of the *Jews*, and is not obscurely intimated in the Scripture-History itself*. The Subject of this admirable Piece is to represent the Vanity of the World, and the Folly of Mankind in making a wrong Estimate of Things, or passing false Judgments concerning Good and Evil. In the Close of the foregoing Chapter †, he was discoursing upon the *Vanity of Vanities* indeed, Childhood and Youth. *Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes: But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment.* Meaning either literally: "Take thy Pleasure, enjoy thyself in thy Youth, so far as is consistent with Innocence and Virtue; but that thou may'st not exceed those Bounds, consider that thou must give a strict Account of thy Actions

* 2 Chron. xi. 17.

† Ver. 9;

in another World." Or rather *tropically*, SERM. and *ironically*: "Do so; indulge thyself in I.

thy youthful Vanities, Lufts, and other Vices; stick at nothing to gratify thy vicious Appetites and Inclinations: But take this along with thee; thou wilt for so doing, without a severe Repentance and thorough Reformation, perish everlastingly: *Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment.* If you will do so, you must abide the Consequences, be miserable in the next Life, as you were merry in this." *Therefore* (continues he) *remove Sorrow from thy Heart, and put away Evil from thy Flesh; for Childhood and Youth are Vanity**. The twofold Interpretation is the same as before. He either *permits* innocent Pleasures; or *ironically* seems to *permit*, but really *forbids* unlawful ones: According to either Sense, putting the young Man in mind, that his *golden Days* (as he fancies them) are mere Vanity. *Childhood* here cannot mean what we commonly and most properly call by that Name; because this Kind of Instruction and Reproof cannot be applied to those *so* tender Years: But

B 2

by

* Ver. 10.

SERM. by *Childhood* in this Place we must under-

I. stand the *prima Adolescentia*, the first Part of Youth, or that which *borders* upon *Childhood*; by *Youth*, that Part of it which *borders* upon *Manhood*, or Middle Age: And *both* (as the *Royal Preacher* assures us, and as we find by Experience) are *Vanity*. At the Beginning of this Chapter, continuing his Subject, he proceeds thus: *Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, while the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no Pleasure in them. While they come not; i. e. before they come.* He speaks of *Old Age*, advising those who are *young* to be religious while they are so; and not to defer the Service of God, and the Care of their Souls, in hopes of a long Life: For, besides that in all Probability a long Life will not happen to be their Portion; if it does, its last Stage is of all the most improper and unfit for the beginning of so important a Work. *While the Sun, or the Light, or the Moon, or the Stars be not darken'd**; i. e. the *Faculties* of the *Mind*, the Understanding, Judgment, Fancy, Memory, shall be dimm'd and

* Ver. 2.

and obscured: *Nor the Clouds return after* SERM.
the Rain; i. e. Sorrow succeed Sorrow; one I.

Deep calling another, because of the Noise of
the Water-pipes *; all being *Rain and Clouds*,
 without the Intervention of any *Sunshine*.
 Pursuing his elegant Description of *Old Age*
 and *Death*, he makes a beautiful Allegory
 between a House and a human Body. *In*
the Day when the Keepers of the House shall
tremble; the *Arms and Hands*, which are
 appointed for the Guard and Defence of the
 Body, become feeble and paralytick: *And*
the strong Men shall bow themselves; the *Back*,
Thighs, and Legs, in which the *Strength* of
 the Man is chiefly lodged, shall bend and
 stoop: *And the Grinders* [the *Teeth*] *cease*,
because they are few; and *those that look out*
of the Windows [i. e. the *Eyes*, to which
 their *Sockets* are like *Windows*,] *shall be*
darken'd: *And the Doors shall be shut in the*
Streets, when the Sound of the Grinding is
low: The *Valves and Passages*, for the Uses
 of *Nourishment and Respiration*, shall not
 perform their usual Functions, *Digestion*
 (which is a Sort of *Grinding*) being weak
 and languid: *And he* [the old Man] *shall*

B 3

rise

* Psalm xlii. 7.

6 *The Necessity of being religious*

SERM. *rise up at the Voice of the Bird; i. e. early*

I. in the Morning, for want of Sleep and Rest at Night: *And all the Daughters of Musick shall be brought low; the Organs of Speech and of Singing shall be impaired, and the Ears shall be dull of hearing: Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high; any Hillock, or rising Ground, at which they may stumble; or any Height or Eminence, from which they may fall: And Fears shall be in the Way; and the Almond-tree [Grey Hairs] shall flourish, and the Grasshopper shall be a Burden; i. e. the whole Body, dried, shrunk, and wither'd like a Grasshopper, shall be troublesome and uneasy to itself: And Desire [all Sorts of Appetite] shall fail; because Man goeth to his long Home, and the Mourners go about the Streets. This is literal, and thrown out of the Allegory: Which is delicately resumed, Ver. 6. Or ever the silver Cord [the spinal Marrow] be loos'd, or the golden Bowl [the Membrane which wraps the Brain] be broken; or the Pitcher be broken at the Fountain, or the Wheel broken at the Cistern: By these last metaphorical Expressions, for Reasons not so proper to be here mention'd, being to be understood the*
Ceasing

Ceasing of the *Contraction* and *Dilatation* of SERM.
the *Heart*, of the *Dispersion* or *Circulation* I.
of the *Blood* over the whole Body: Upon
the *Ceasing* of all which, *Death* (as every
body knows) must necessarily ensue; or ra-
ther such *Ceasing*, with respect to the Body
singly considered, is *Death* itself. The Sub-
stance of the whole Argument therefore is
this: That Men should accustom them-
selves to the Service of God *early*, in their
youthful Days, at least not defer it till *Old*
Age overtakes them; because if they do,
it is great Odds but they defer it till *Death*
overtakes them likewise. — *Remember*, &c.
As *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*, though *Habits* of
the *Understanding*, are by the *Sacred Writers*
perpetually used in such a Sense as to in-
clude the *Will* and the *Affections*, implying
Practice, as well as *Theory*; so *Remembrance*,
in this and other Places, is taken in the
same Extent, in a *moral*, as well as a *natu-
ral* Signification. Thus to *forget God*, in
the Language of the *Psalmist*, is to live an
ungodly and *wicked* Life. Some indeed there
are so immersed in Vice, in Sensuality, or
Covetousness, or both; that even *strictly*
and *literally* speaking they *forget* their Cre-

SERM. ator, *neither is God in all their Thoughts* *.

I. However, we *may* remember him in this merely *natural* Sense, and yet *not* remember him according to the full Import of this *Precept*. In discoursing upon which, I shall proceed by the following Method.

- I. FIRST I shall shew, that an *early Piety* is of the last Importance; that *young Persons* especially ought to be *religious*; that they should be frequently *reminded* of this great Truth by *others*, and frequently and seriously *consider* it *themselves*. Remember NOW *thy Creator in the Days of thy YOUTH*.
- II. THAT if they are not religious when they are *young*, or at least before they are *old*, there is great Danger that they will *never* be so at all. *While the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no Pleasure in them.*
- III. I SHALL make an *Application* of this to Persons of *all Ages*; as, according to their several Circumstances, they are severally concerned or interested in it.

I. THE

* Psalm x. 4.

I. THE *First* Head consists of *two* Parts: I.

The Importance of an early Religion in *itself*; and the Importance of Youth's being *reminded* of it, and frequently and seriously *considering* it. The *former* depends upon its being *necessary*; the *latter* both upon *that*, and also upon its being *difficult*. *Necessary* it is, in Point of *Duty*, and in Point of *Interest*; with regard to *God*, and to *Ourselves*; with regard to the *Present*, and to the *Future*. Religion is our *Duty* in *every* Scene and Stage of Life; consequently in *Youth*, among the rest. God has a Right to our Service from the first Moment of our having any considerable Use of Reason, to the last Moment of our Lives. Yet *young Persons* are apt to flatter themselves, that *because they are young*, they have for *that very Reason* a Kind of Dispensation to be foolish and vicious, and that 'tis *time enough* to be wise and good when they are *older*: Of which more shall be said before we conclude, and in a more proper Place. In the mean time I only ask them, whether they would not take it ill to be told that they are not as yet come to *Years of Discretion?*
and

SERM. and whether *Virtue* be not the genuine, the

I. necessary Issue and Result of *true* Discretion? But besides this, *Youth*, considered as *such*, has particular Obligations. The *First-Fruits*, under the Law, were offer'd to God in Sacrifice by the Command of God himself: And the First-Fruits of our *Lives*, the *Flower* of our Age, when offer'd to him in a spiritual and much better way, must needs send forth a most *sweet-smelling Savour*, highly acceptable and well-pleasing. And are we not obliged to present the *best* we have, to him who gave us *all* we have; who is himself the *best*, the *greatest*, and the most *glorious* of Beings? Can those who flourish in the *Spring* of their Years think they are nothing indebted to their Creator and Preserver for their youthful Health, Vigour, Spirit, and Beauty? Add to this, that they are of an Age the most docile and flexible, most apt to receive *any* Impressions, consequently those of Virtue and Goodness among others: And if they do not receive these, (and retain them too) but the direct contrary, the Fault is in none but in *themselves*. For though the Task of Virtue be *difficult* to them, (of which hereafter) yet
it

it is very *possible*; nay they may make it SERM.
easy and *pleasant*, if they will: And there- I.

fore I stick to my Assertion, that if they do not practise it, the Fault is only in *themselves*. Thus for the *Present*: And as to the *Future*, nobody wants to be informed what a mighty Influence the Conduct of our *Youth* has, and necessarily must have, upon the whole Course and Progress of our Lives; and in this, as well as all other Building, how much the Superstructure depends upon the Foundation. The good or ill Habits we then contract give such a Turn and Cast to the very Constitution both of our Bodies and Minds, that, though we live never so long, they generally accompany us to our Graves. But because this is to be more particularly insisted upon under my *Second* General Head, I wave it *here*, and pass on to *another* Consideration. As we grow in Years, our worldly Pleasures, Diversions, and Amusements, of all Kinds, gradually flatten upon us; nay most, if not all, of them at last quite leave and forsake us. By consequence, if we do not at the proper Season, in the Days of our Strength and Vigour, lay in a Stock of *other* Delights
and

SERM. and Entertainments, those which flow from

I. *Reason and Religion, from Piety and Devotion, from a good Faith and a good Conscience, which are increased by Age, rather than diminished; we shall run the greatest Hazard of being in a most forlorn and comfortless Condition here, as well as in a most miserable one hereafter. We must imitate the Bee and the Ant, with respect to our spiritual, as well as temporal Provision; otherwise we shall have Leanness in our Souls, more than in our Bodies, when the evil Days are actually come, and the Years more than draw nigh, of which we shall say that we have no Pleasure in them.*

NECESSARY then it is that *young Persons* should be *religious*; and therefore it is of great Importance that they should be *reminded* of this Truth, and that they themselves should seriously *consider* it: As it is moreover, because it is *difficult*. This *Difficulty* proceeds from several Causes. 1st, *Young Persons* want Experience, and therefore are generally rash and inconsiderate. 2^{dly}, Their Blood and Spirits, their Fancies and Imaginations, being brisk, high, and warm; their *Passions* of both Kinds, their

their *Appetites* and their *Aversions*, are very SERM.
strong; and their *Temptations*, especially to I.
 sensual Pleasure, extremely *violent*. Upon
 these Accounts, *3dly*, They are apt to flat-
 ter and deceive themselves with Excuses,
 and fallacious Reasonings. As, *1st*, They
 argue from this *very Difficulty* which we are
 now considering, That the *Temptations* to
 which *Youth* is continually exposed are ma-
 ny, great, and violent; their Passions strong,
 and their Reason weak: Therefore, *2dly*,
 They hope God will have Mercy upon their
tender Years. *3dly*, That their Lives are but
 in the *Beginning*; they have Time before
 them, and are resolved to be very good one
 time or other. *Lastly*, That their *Tempta-*
tions and *Appetites* will gradually *decrease*;
 and as they grow *older*, they shall of course
 grow *wiser* and *better*. I speak here only
 of those who have *some* good Dispositions:
 As for those who have *none* at all, they, go-
 ing on in their Courses without the least
 Check or Restraint, will not be at the *Pains*
 thus to *deceive* themselves; and their Case
 is so *plain*, as well as *deplorable*, that it need
 not be distinctly considered by us. But for
 those *others*, I shall in different Parts of this
 Discourse

SERM. Discourse give a full Answer to all the Ex-

I. cuses and evasive Reasonings they alledge.

At present, let them reflect, that as their Duty in *Youth* is *difficult*, it is *necessary* too: And the *last* Consideration ought in all Reason to over-rule the *first*. It is *necessary*, I say, upon *many* Accounts, as I have shewn already; but especially for *one* Reason, which, though hinted at, has not been yet insisted upon; and is the *Second* General Head I proposed to speak to, *viz.*

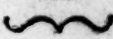
II. THAT if they are not religious when they are *young*, or at least before they are *old*, there is great Danger that they will *never* be so at all. *While the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no Pleasure in them.*

HERE again we have *two* Parts; which, though nearly *related* to each other, are yet of *distinct* Consideration: *While they are young, or at least before they are old.* For the *first* of these, there are Multitudes, who, if they do not apply themselves to the Practice of Virtue in their *Youth*, never do it at all; for this obvious Reason, because they do not *live* beyond that Period: They do
not

not repent and reform *after* it, because they SERM.
 die *in* it: A Point, which, though (one I.
 would think) sufficiently *plain*, is by no ~
 means sufficiently *considered*. And this is a
 full Answer to *one* of the Excuses and fal-
 lacious Reasonings above recited, with which
young Persons are prone to impose upon
 themselves. They do not consider, as they
 should do, that the *Young* are almost as
 likely to die soon as the *Old*; more so than
 the *Middle-aged*, being obnoxious to ma-
 ny more Distempers and Casualties than
 the *last-mentioned*. How frequently are they
cut down like a Flower * indeed! in the
 Flower and Freshness of their Years!
 Do they never observe (according to the
 useful Method in which Registers of Mor-
 tality have of late been kept and publish'd)
 what Numbers are buried between the Ages
 of Twenty and Thirty? Do they upon
 Tomb-stones and Monuments read no Ages
 recorded but only from Sixty and upwards?
 And did they never see *Fourscore* in Mourn-
 ing, for *Eighteen*?—But let us suppose them,
 2dly, to outlive that Period which common-
 ly goes by the Name of *Youth*. Some, no
 doubt,

SERM. doubt, many it is to be hoped, repent

I. and reform *after* that Age, who were all
 ~~~~~ along vicious *in* it. But how many more  
 are there who do *not*? Their Passions indeed (*some* of them at least, for 'tis certainly not true of them *all*) are generally calmer and cooler, and their sensual Appetites not so impetuous: But then their ill Habits are stiff and confirm'd; which perhaps is more than a Balance to the other. If therefore it be *difficult* (as I readily grant it is) to be religious in *Youth*, it is more so, for any thing we know at least, to be religious immediately *after* it: And let the *last* be taken notice of no less than the *first*. The Advantages, as well as Disadvantages, of *Youth* are many and great. Besides those I named under the *foregoing* Head, *that* Age is the fittest to begin, attempt, enterprize, and execute any thing. If, on the *one* hand, the Passions and bodily Appetites be then more strong; on the *other*, the whole Constitution both of Body and Mind is then more lively and active: Nay the Briskness of the Passions themselves, if rightly directed, may be made a good Use of. Evil Customs have not taken so deep Root, as they must do if they  
 they

they are continued: Nature is then more SERM.  
 simple and ingenuous; and *Shame*, that great I.  
*Guardian*, or at least *Friend*, of *Innocence*, 

most quick and sensible. Here then is an  
 Answer to *another* of their false and dan-  
 gerous Reasonings. It is a great Mistake to  
 think they must needs grow *wiser* and *better*,  
 as they grow *older*, and past their  
*Youth*. If they have not laid a good Foun-  
 dation *then*, the *Contrary* is more probable:  
 For admitting that with Years *Passion* grows  
 weaker, *Reason* stronger, and *Experience*  
 greater, (though the two *first* of these are  
 by no means absolutely *necessary*) the Inve-  
 teracy of *wicked Habits*, which can never  
 be too much *considered* and *feared* by us, is  
 more perhaps than a Counterpoise to all  
 this. What if the Man *thinks* coolly, and  
*reasons* strongly; 'tis mere *Speculation* all this  
 while; I mean as it generally happens: He  
 has not the Heart to *act* according to his  
 deliberate *Judgment*, but is in the wretched  
 State of *Video meliora proboque, Deteriora se-*  
*quor*\*—his *Will* making an actual Choice,  
 which his *Understanding* habitually con-  
 demns. In short, if Youth *fly* and *hurry*

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C

itself

18 *The Necessity of being religious*

SERM. itself into Vice *without* Thinking; and con-

I. firm'd Manhood *walk*, or be *slowly dragg'd* into it, *in spite of* Thinking; where is the mighty Difference, unless it be much to the Disadvantage of the *latter*? And yet, without an *early* Piety, this, in all Probability, will be the Case.

As for corrupt Inclinations to *sensual* Pleasures, it is another great Mistake to think that they must necessarily be *extinguished*, or even *abated*, with the Strength and Vigour of the *Body*. They probably will *not* be so, if the Man has, without Restraint or Controul, indulged them in his *Youth*; and they certainly will *not* in *Old Age* itself, if he has indulged them in Fact as long as he could, and in Thought, Fancy, and Imagination even after that: Which, if we may judge from the whole Tenor of their Conversation, is evidently the Case of *Many*. 'Tis not *growing in Years* therefore, but getting and *growing in Grace*, that makes us virtuous even with regard to our *Bodies*. If those who have in this Respect been habitually wicked, do not, while they are *lusty and strong*, (as the *Psalmist* speaks) by earnestly imploring God's Grace,

Grace, and using the Means of Mortification and Self-denial which he has prescribed, turn the Bent of their Minds another way, and furnish them with quite contrary Images and Ideas, give them quite contrary Gusts and Relishes of Things; they will be guilty of sensual Sins, even when it is not in their Power actually to commit them: And wretched is the Condition of those who have lost the Power, and yet retain the Appetite. If a Man has these Lusts in his Mind after they have left his Body, he is certainly most miserable during his very short Abode in this World; and I do not see how, without a Miracle, it is so much as possible for him to be happy in the next. Which brings us to consider, under the other Branch of this Head, the extreme Hazard of deferring the Service of God, and the Care of our Souls, till Old Age overtakes us. The same Arguments and Reasons which have been urged in the former Part take place in this, with additional Strength. If it be foolish and dangerous to put off this great and necessary Work till after we are young, 'tis little less than desperate Madness to put it off till we come to be old. The later, the worse, is an



SERM. unfailing Maxim in all Cases of this Nature.

I. In every Age of Life we *may* die soon, but in *Old Age* we *must* die soon: And when our *Time is so short*, is it likely that we shall have *Time enough* to begin, carry on, and finish, so mighty a Task as *working out our Salvation*? Besides, were our Days in this *last Stage* many more than they usually are, or are ever like to be; yet it is a very unfit Season for this great Work, because they are *evil Days*, as the *Royal Preacher* here speaks, *Years of which we shall say that we have no Pleasure in them*: When the *Sun, and the Light, and the Moon, and the Stars shall be darken'd, and the Clouds return after the Rain*: When the *Keepers of the House shall tremble, and the strong Men shall bow themselves, &c.* When *Desire shall fail, and the Grasshopper shall be a Burden, &c.* according to that elegant Allegorical Description which I cited, and briefly explained, in the Beginning of this Discourse. And is it a Time to dispatch our greatest and most weighty Concern, when our Bodies are weak and in Pain, our Minds disorder'd and discomposed, the Faculties of both impaired, and almost useless? How shall we be able

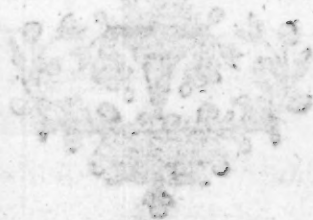
to

to do our most *difficult*, our most *important* SERM.  
Business, when we are scarce fit for *any* Bu- I.  
siness *at all*? In a Word, the same Argu-  
ments usually brought to shew the Hazard  
of a *Death-bed Repentance* may with a very  
little Alteration take place here; *Old Age*  
being *itself* a Kind of *Disease*, as well as  
subject to many *others*, and even in its best  
State nearly bordering upon *Death*.

WHAT remains to be said on this Sub-  
ject, under my *Third* General Head, must  
be deferred to some other Opportunity.



to do our most difficult, our most important, &c. &c.  
 But, when we are scarce for any thing  
 of all in a World, the same thing  
 means usually, I might to show the Flax  
 of a Death-bed, I suppose, with a very  
 little Attention, make place here, Obedience  
 being only a Kind of Duty, as well as  
 subject to many laws, and even in its best  
 State nearly depending upon them.  
 What is meant to be said on this Sub-  
 ject, under my Title, I think, must  
 be directed to some other Opportunity.



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## SERMON II.

The Necessity of being  
Religious in all Ages  
of Life, particularly in  
YOUTH.

The *Second* Sermon on this Subject.

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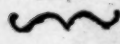
ECCLES. XII. I.

*Remember now thy Creator in the  
Days of thy Youth; while the  
evil Days come not, nor the Years  
draw nigh, when thou shalt say,  
I have no Pleasure in them.*

III. **I** COME now, in the *Third* and *Last* SERM.  
Place, to apply what has been said II.  
**I** in my *last* Discourse, by way of  
*Exhortation* and *Advice*, to Persons of all  
C 4 Ages



SERM. *Ages*; as, according to their several Circumstances, they are severally concerned in it.

II.  In general, Let the *Young* who are in an ill Course immediately get out of it, and be-take themselves to a good one. Let those who have lived wickedly in all their *Youth*, and are now past it, be religious and holy in their confirm'd *Manhood*; and let those who have been vicious in *both* be virtuous in *Old Age*: *For better late than never*. But Oh! Beware it be not *too* late; always remembering, that as a *true* Repentance is never *too late*, so a *late* Repentance is seldom *true*. But more *particularly*.

1<sup>st</sup>, To *young Persons*. Who would not pity them, and even tremble for them, considering how much depends upon their present Conduct, with respect both to the *Present* and the *Future*; and to how many and great Dangers they are every Moment exposed! What we commonly call a *Young Man* is a Kind of Middle between *Man* and *Boy*: And how great are the Difficulties in this nice and slippery Period, all who have had the *Education* of *Youth* committed to their Care are sufficiently sensible: Dangers from Self-Love, and Self-Sufficiency; from  
their

their fancying themselves very wise and SERM.  
knowing, when they have not Experience II.

enough to convince them that they are foolish and ignorant; (for in truth, the more wise we grow, the more sensible we are of our Folly; the more Knowledge we have, the more sensible we are of our Ignorance:) Dangers from Positiveness and Confidence, from Rashness and Want of Consideration; from violent Passions of all Kinds; but above all, from sensual Pleasures and Vanities, *the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life*, as St. John \* speaks; from *Rioting and Drunkenness, from Chambering and Wantonness*, as St. Paul † speaks; from doating upon the Splendor and Gaiety of the World; from an *immoderate* Love even of *lawful* Recreations and Diversions; from Idleness and Mis-spending their precious Time, a Treasure never to be valued too much, though commonly valued so little! In short, *the fiery Darts of the Wicked* ‡ are continually flying round them; wherever they go, they tread among Snares; and a thousand bewitching *Sirens* are singing in their Ears to allure them into De-

\* 1 John ii. 16.

† Rom. xiii. 13.

‡ Eph. vi. 16.

26      *The Necessity of being religious*

SERM. Destruction. What then should they do,

II. but seriously, daily, hourly, consider these  
 many great and apparent Dangers with which they are encompassed; the *Necessity* of their being *religious* while they are *young*, notwithstanding its *Difficulty*; and the vast Importance of *beginning* well, and contracting good Habits in their *tender Years*? Let them reflect farther, that sensual Sins are as pernicious in themselves, as they are difficult to be avoided. Dearly beloved, (says St. Peter \*) *I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL.* The Expression is very emphatical and remarkable: Let it be always sounding in their Ears, and sink deep into their Hearts. Let them earnestly pray to God for the Grace and Assistance of his Holy Spirit; immediately repent of whatever they have done amiss *already*, and be infinitely careful and cautious for the *future*; remember that *evil Communications corrupt good Manners* †; and avoid *bad Company*, as they would *fly from the Face of a Serpent* ‡, or from a House infected with

\* 1 Pet. ii. 11.

† 1 Cor. xv. 33.

‡ Eccclus. xxi. 2.

with the Plague. *Lastly*, let them learn in SERM. a literal Sense *responsare cupidinibus*\*, to answer II. all those fallacious Reasonings I mentioned, which their *vicious Inclinations* suggest to them; and by which the *Deceitfulness of Sin* †, and of their own Hearts, is apt to impose upon them. The Weakness of some of them I have shewn already, and the rest shall be considered here.—They have strong *Temptations*, they say; they are full of youthful Blood, Heat, and Vigour; and alluring Objects are continually laid in their Way. So say I too; and I have mentioned and enlarged upon those Dangers, but with this Design, that those who are *young* should beware of them and avoid them, not fall *into* them, by drawing false and delusive Arguments *from* them. Every Age of Life (except mere *Childhood*) has strong *Temptations*, as well as theirs: The *Praise* and *Reward* of *doing good* would be very *inconsiderable*, were we not *tempted* to *do evil*: And the *Use* of *Temptations* is to *enhance* our *Virtue*, not to *excuse* our *Vices*. They may say again, that their *Passions* and *Appetites* being strong, and their *Reason* weak,

\* HORACE.

† Heb. iii. 13.



SERM. weak, God will have Mercy upon their *tender Years*. The Strength of the *Passions* and *Appetites* falls in with the Strength of the *Temptations*; and so that Part is answered already. As for the *Weakness* of their *Reason*, would they upon any *other* Occasion make this Plea? Nay, would they not take it ill to be told that their *Reason* is *weak*? They are, in truth, apt to think it *stronger* than it really *is*: Not but that it is strong *enough* to enable them to do their Duty; which is so plain and obvious, that not only *young Persons* of both Sexes, but even *Children*, are very capable of understanding it. And those who have any thing almost of *Education* (how much stronger is the Argument as to those who have the *best*) actually *do* understand it, at ten or eleven Years of Age. What Reason then have those, with whom I am now discoursing, to flatter themselves with Hopes of God's Mercy, because of their *tender Years*? He will indeed *so* have Mercy upon them, as to pardon them upon their true *Repentance* and *Reformation*; and the same may be said of all *other* Sinners; but not *so* as to *indulge* them in their Wickedness and Vices. We have

have shewn that he will *bring young Men* SERM.  
*into Judgment*, as well as *others*: And there II.  
 is all the Reason and Justice in the World  
 that he *should*. What think they of their  
*Vow in Baptism*? They learn it in their  
*Childhood*, and understand it too: And do  
 they imagine it does not bind them in their  
*Youth*? Are the *Pomps and Vanities of this*  
*wicked World*, and all the *sinful Lusts of the*  
*Flesh*, to be renounced by them, only when  
 they are *old* and *past* them? but to be in-  
 dulg'd in *Youth*, which is the *chief* Season  
 of Temptations to them? No, they will  
 answer; they certainly *do amiss* in so indul-  
 ging them: But in consideration of their  
*Youth* God will have Mercy upon them.  
 What do they mean? In consideration of  
 their *good Looks*? their florid Air of Bloom  
 and Freshness, or perhaps of Ingenuity and  
 Simplicity, and the outward Appearance of  
 Innocence itself! Alas! *God* is not at all a  
*Respecter of Persons* \*, much less in such a  
 Sense as this. But if they mean he will be  
 merciful to them upon the account of their  
*Temptations*, it is returning to the Point we  
 were at before, and which has been suffi-  
 ciently

\* Acts x. 34:

SERM. ciently spoken to. If they will upon this

II. Subject have any Regard to their *outward Form and Comeliness*, let them consider how lovely *Religion and Goodness* appear, when heighten'd by the Beauty and Sweetness of *Youth*:

*Gratior & pulchro veniens in corpore virtus.\**

This, I confess, is an *inferior* Consideration, though something too. But the Honour, the Praise, and the Reward of grappling with so many Temptations in that Scene of Life, and of bravely conquering and surmounting them, is very great and glorious. Let them, as they value their *precious*, their *immortal* Souls, seriously lay to Heart what has been said *here*, and in *other* Parts of *this* and my *former* Discourse; make a *true* Use of the *Reason* which God has given them, earnestly pray for his *Grace*, and not delude themselves with vain Imaginations, ungrounded Confidences, and false Arguing. Let that of the *Psalmist* be continually in their Thoughts: *Wherewithal shall a young Man cleanse his Way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word†.* And  
Oh!

\* VIRGIL.

† Psalm cxix. 9.

Oh! that every one of them could add, in SERM.  
 the next Words, *With my whole Heart have* II!  
*I sought thee*: As they all certainly may in  
 the next immediately afterwards, *O let me*  
*not wander from thy Commandments.*

2. My second Application is to such as  
 are in the Middle between Youth and Old  
 Age. The Generality, it is to be feared,  
 even of the Best, have Reason enough to  
 use that Prayer of the Psalmist, *Remember*  
*not the Sins of my Youth\**: Remember not  
 how I did *not* remember thee in the Days of  
 my Youth, as I ought to have done; but ac-  
 cording to thy Mercy remember thou me, for  
 thy Goodness, O Lord. However, many there  
 are, who in the main can reflect upon that  
 Age, after they are past it, with Joy and  
 Comfort. Let them bless God for it, con-  
 tinue and persevere in their Goodness to the  
 End of their Lives: Which (having so well  
 begun) they will find to be very easy. To  
 those who, on the contrary, have spent  
 their whole Youth in Folly and Wickedness,  
 the Advice is very plain: Let them with  
 strong Crying and Tears†, with the truest  
 Contrition and Compunction of Heart, im-  
 plore

\* Psalm xlv. 7.

† Heb. v. 7.



SERM. plore God's Pardon for it, and with a firm,

II. well-grounded, *manly*, Christian Resolution  
 ~~~~~ betake themselves *now* to a virtuous and religious Course. Under this Article I cannot do better, for their Edification, than recite a Passage which I find in an excellent Writer; and that in his own Words as to the main, though with a little Variation, because, I think, in some Things he expresses himself too generally. The Whole is set in a most clear and strong Light, by a natural Allusion. "As 'tis a great while  
 " (says he *) before we come to the Use of
 " our Reason, so even when we *are*, 'tis a
 " longer time [generally speaking] before
 " we come to a mature and *full* Use of it.
 " What we commonly call *Years of Discre-*
 " *tion* falls short of it by a long Cast, and
 " is as it were but the Dawning of it. For
 " though our Day has been then for some
 " time broken, and our Light so far ad-
 " vanced as to subject us to Laws and Go-
 " vernment, so as to make us responsible
 " for our Actions; we are not yet, how-
 " ever, [for the most part] so far come to
 " ourselves, as duly to consider our true
 " Good

* NORRIS of *Christian Prudence*, p. 29, 30.

" Good and Evil. So that 'tis still but SERM.
 " *Morning* with us, and our Sun is yet at a H.
 " good distance from the Meridian. In 
 " the mean time, as it is getting up thi-
 " ther, it is to contend with Clouds and
 " Mists all the way. The Thing I intend
 " is, that our *Passions* are then very strong
 " and violent, while our Reason is weak
 " and imperfect; and require abundance of
 " Government, while the other is hardly
 " able so much as to hold the Reins. And
 " so the Heat of Passion is apt to hurry us
 " along our youthful Stage; and while it
 " does so, we must needs make many false
 " Steps at best, commit many Follies and
 " Indiscretions, lay in a Stock for future
 " Repentance, and withal contract many
 " ill Habits, which it will be Work enough
 " for our remaining Life to unlearn; and
 " from which if we do not recover our-
 " selves about the *maturer* Part of it, (a
 " very *critical* Time for Men's breaking off
 " their vicious Habits, and taking up wiser
 " Measures) 'tis much if we ever do. If
 " our Sun does not overcome the Mist and
 " break out then, about the *Noon* of our
 " Lives, 'tis much if it be not *in* for the
 " Vol. II. D " whole

SERM. "whole Day. Accordingly 'tis observed,

II. "that Men rarely grow good and virtuous,
 "either when very young, or when very
 "old.—And indeed 'twill be Work enough
 "to be so even at the maturer Part, though
 "they *should* be so fortunate as to take that
 "critical Season for it. That indeed is the
 "most likely Time, after Passion begins to
 "cool, and before our Habits are too much
 "confirmed; but even then 'tis a great
 "Work to *dare to be wise* and good, and
 "which cannot be done without a great
 "deal of Prudence and rational Applica-
 "tion." I add, and without a great Mea-
 "sure of *God's Grace*, for which we must
 earnestly pray, without much *Industry* and
Diligence of our own. Let such as I am now
 speaking of seriously consider, that they have
 mispent their *Youth* already; and do they
 think to mispend their *Middle Age* too, and
 put God off with what shall remain on the
 other Side of *Threescore*, or perhaps *Seventy*;
 with the very *Refuse*, the *Lees* and *Dregs*
 of their Lives? Besides the Presumption
 of depending upon living so long, can there
 be a more heinous Provocation, than to
 think of giving God nothing but the *worst*
 they

they have, and that which is good for no-
thing else? Then again, suppose the Tempta-
 tions to sensual Sins should leave them when
 they are *past* their *Youth*, which (as we have
 seen) is not very likely; yet here come the
 Temptations more peculiar to *Middle Age*,
 the Baits of Ambition, Covetousness, Cun-
 ning, Fraud, and *Worldly-Wisdom*, which
 in the Sight of God, and of right Reason,
 is mere *Folly*: At best, carking Cares, and
 over-solicitous Concern for the Things of
this Life, and in making Provision for them-
 selves and Families: All which are apt to
 estrange our Minds from God and heavenly
 Things, and render us unfit for the Exer-
 cises and Duties of Religion. *Youth* is com-
 monly, and truly enough, supposed to be
 only a *riper* Sort of *Childhood*: *Old Age* is
 called a *second Infancy*, and sometimes in-
 deed it is not much better. Those there-
 fore of the *middle* Stage seem to boast that
 they alone are properly *Men*. If that then
 be the Case, let them *shew themselves Men*,
 as the Prophet * speaks, *i. e.* act like *ra-*
tional Creatures; which those who are bap-
 tized and educated in the true Religion

D 2

cannot

* Isaiah xlvii. 8.

SERM. cannot do, without being good *Christians*.

II. They have misemploy'd and lost a great deal of Time *already*; and yet in the Course of Nature (though they *may* be soon cut off, and God only knows *how* soon) they have a considerable Portion still *to come*. Which two Things put together both *admonish* and *encourage* them to be *Now* wise and good: Here is a Necessity for *Repentance* on the one hand, and great *Hope* of *Success* on the other. *Behold, now is the accepted Time; behold, now is the Day of Salvation**: NOW, or in all Probability NEVER. Which brings me to make my *third* and *last* Application, viz.

3. To those who are in *Old Age*. *The hoary Head is a Crown of Glory, if it be found in the Way of Righteousness*†. It is so in *this* World, as it ought to be revered and honoured; and even with regard to the next, it borders upon the *Crown of Glory*, because it is just ready to receive it. The good *old Man's* Vessel is just entering into Port, into the Haven of everlasting Blessedness: He is, in a manner, out of Danger; and it is almost impossible for him to miscarry.

* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

† Prov. xvi. 31.

carry. But then let it be remember'd, on SERM.
the *other* side, that if those who are in this II.

last Scene be *not* found in the Way of Righteousness, it is almost impossible for them to escape. They have the Sins of *Youth*, confirm'd *Manhood*, and some at least of *Old Age itself*, to be repented of: Their Time is so short, their Accounts so vastly swell'd, so confused, intricate, and perplex'd; their vicious Habits so strong, their Faculties both of Body and Mind so weak, and the Hope of God's Grace for their Assistance so small; that it is next to a Miracle, if they obtain Pardon and Salvation. However, let not even *these* despair: *While there is Life, there is Hope*; ordinarily speaking, and for any thing we know at least. Let them cry mightily * to him who is mighty to save †; devote, in a manner, *all* their Time to the Service of God, and the Care of their Souls; attend to that great Concern, and almost to nothing else. Let them do something *very extraordinary* and *uncommon*, to testify the Sincerity of their Repentance, and their Zeal for God's Glory. Those who are *rich*, in particular, have a Power and Opportu-

D 3

nity

* Jonah iii. 8.

† Isaiah lxiii. 1.

SERM. nity of doing this, which *others* have not,

II. (though *All* have *some*, in *one* way or *other*)



I mean by Works of *Charity* and *Piety*.

IT is here to be remarked, that *Old Age*, as well as *Youth*, has its Pretences and Excuses, upon the Score of *Temptations*. As the *former* pleads the *Strength* of its Constitution; so the *latter* pleads its *Weakness* and *Infirmity*. I have shewn that *no* *Temptations* whatsoever, in *any Age*, I here add in *any Circumstances* or *Condition* of *Life*, can make *Sin* cease to be *Sin*, or even excuse the Commission of it; and that in this State of *Trial* there could be no *Praise* or *Reward* due to *Virtue* without them: Concerning which no more need be added in this Place.

UPON the *Whole*, and with reference to *all Ages*, I observe by way of *Caution*, that while we press the Duties of *Religion*, we do not speak against all Pleasures, Recreations, and Diversions of this *Life*. Which I mention, because we can no sooner discourse *very seriously* upon the Care of our Souls, and the great Concerns of *Eternity*, but some Men's Thoughts are running this way, that we are drawing a dark Veil over all

all the Delights and Enjoyments of the SERM.
World, and are recommending a dismal II.
State of universal Sadness and Melancholy.

This is by no means true: *Religion* is so far from being inconsistent with *innocent*, i. e. the only *true* Chearfulness, that it is the chief Promoter of it. A good Conscience is itself the greatest of Pleasures, and gives the true Gust and Relish to all others. *Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth*: Rejoice indeed, and without an Irony: Rejoice, whosoever thou art, whether in *Youth*, in the Ripeness of *Manhood*, or in *Old Age* itself. So far, I say, are we from endeavouring to *damp the Spirits* by persuading Men to be *religious*, that by so doing we persuade them to be *chearful*. Religion is not inconsistent with any *reasonable* Pleasure, no not with *all* sensible Pleasure; but only with Sin, Folly, and Vice. *There is nothing better for a Man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should enjoy Good in his Labour.* This also I saw, that it was from the Hand of God; says the divine Author of my Text in another Place*.

D 4

To

* Eccles. ii. 24.

SERM. To come towards a *Conclusion*, with a

II. few short, promiscuous Observations. *Old Age* is generally *desired* by those who have it *not*, and *complained* of by those who *have* it: A sure Sign, or rather Proof, that *all is Vanity*. The *Young* wish they may come to be *Old*, and the *Old* wish they were *Young* again; but in a very different Sense. The *First* desire *Old Age*, not for its own sake, but for the sake of long Life: The *Last* would return to *Youth*, were it possible, for its own sake, and for the sake of long Life too. Thus, I say, it is *generally*, or for the *most part*; for it is not *universally* true: God forbid it should. A wise and good Man would by no means live over his Life again, if it were in his Power; and that too supposing it to have given him more *Joy* than *Grief*, which seldom happens. How much less would he, supposing it to have been quite *otherwise*! which is generally the Case. Were such a thing possible, he will say, and offer'd me this Moment, *valde recussem*, as old *Cato* in *Tully* * nobly speaks. “ I would by no means *accept* it; I would
“ abso-

* *De Senectute.*

“ absolutely and totally *refuse* it.” One in- SERM.
deed of a *contrary* Character, one who had II.
spent his Life in *Folly* and *Vice*, would talk ~~~~~
at another rate:

*O mihi præteritos referat si Juppiter annos!**

O that I could live over my Life again! —
And I confess he would have Reason, if he
intended to make another Use of Life than
he is supposed to have done; and wish'd to
live longer, only that he might *live and die*
better. As Things stand, these Thoughts
and Wishes being vain, *all Persons* of *all*
Ages who are *wicked* have nothing to do
but *immediately* to be *religious*. I say *imme-*
diately, presently, now; whether in the Days
of *Youth, Middle Age, or Old Age*. What-
ever Part of Life we are in, 'tis Madness to
defer it even for a Day; because in every
Part of Life we are not sure to live a Day
longer. And let me close all in the Words
of another excellent Author: “ He that
“ *only* resolves to amend *hereafter*, is cer-
“ tainly resolved *not* to amend *now*; and
“ therefore is [now] in no State of Re-
“ pentance, nor in the Way of Mercy. †”

GOD

* VIRGIL. † GOODMAN'S *Penitent pardon'd*, p. 178.

42 *The Necessity of being religious, &c.*

SERM. — God of his infinite Goodness give us all

II. Grace to see and know *in this our Day the Things that belong to our Peace*, before they are for ever bid from our Eyes.*

To Him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
&c.

* Luke xix. 42.



SERMON

SERMON III.

The Folly and Wickedness of Mocking at SIN.

PROV. XIV. 9.

Fools make a mock at Sin.

THE Prohibition implied in the SERM. Text may at first Sight appear III. unreasonable. Why should the *wisest* of Men brand those with the Name of *Fools*, who seem to act according to the Dictates of *Wisdom*? Is it a Sin to *ridicule* Sin? Ought not *Vice* (if possible) to be rallied out of Countenance, and exposed to the Scorn and Contempt it really deserves? And is *Wit* ill employ'd, when it has *Wickedness*

SERM. *wickedness* for its Object? These Questions will

III. be answered by explaining the *Words*; which

I shall endeavour to do in the Progress of my Discourse upon them. They import *two Things*.

I. A PRACTICE supposed; *Mocking at Sin*.

2. A CENSURE of that *Practice*; those who do so are *Fools*.

WHAT is meant by the Word *Fool* in the Language of the Scriptures, especially in this *Book of Proverbs*, is too well known to require any Explanation. And the Doctrine of the Text taken all together may be resolved into this *Proposition*:

“THAT to *make a mock at Sin* (as some do) is both a *foolish* and a *wicked Practice*.”

IN discussing this Proposition, I shall shew,

I. THE *Nature* of the Thing here forbidden and condemn'd.

II. THE chief *Causes* which incline Men to it. And,

III. THE *Folly and Wickedness* of it.

I. AND

I. AND *first* for the *First* of these, the Nature of the Thing here forbidden and condemn'd. This I shall explain both *negatively* and *positively*; by shewing what it *is not*, and what it really *is*.

As to the *former*, it does not consist in gently and softly ridiculing *Follies*, (which are capable of being reformed) nor even *some Vices*. I say *gently* and *softly*, because this is the *general Rule*; though it may, and does, admit of some *Exceptions*. We must beware that we exceed not the Bounds of Reason and Religion in *one* Instance, while we are endeavouring to promote their Interests in *another*. Yet this we are not chargeable with, for smartly exposing some *Follies* and *Vices*; for instance, extreme *Impertinence*, *Vanity*, and *Self-Conceit*: Who-soever is *very* troublesome to *others* with those Qualities, should be put to some Trouble *himself*. But those more especially deserve to be sharply rallied, who are *themselves* guilty of foolish or impious Raillery; as that always is which is levell'd either at Religion, or at Sin; I mean in the Sense here condemn'd, of which more in its pro-
per

SERM. per Place. Nothing is so justly mock'd, as
 III. this Sort of Mockery; and Derision is then
 ~~~~~ best employ'd, when it has *such* Derision  
 for its Object. But generally speaking the  
 above-mention'd Rule is to be observed.  
 One way or other, however, it is not in-  
 consistent with Morality or Christianity, to  
 endeavour to laugh People out of their Fol-  
 lies and Faults. For there are many ill  
 Qualities which are rather *Follies* than *Faults*,  
 and some which are rather *Faults* than *Sins*;  
 I mean as that Word is commonly used:  
 For in a *wide* Sense they are *Sins* too, and  
 so are all reducible to my Text. These  
 Things are *properly* the Subjects of good-  
 natur'd Ridicule. But then as to Conver-  
 sation, and particular Persons, great Pru-  
 dence and Discretion, as well as good Na-  
 ture and a good Design, are absolutely ne-  
 cessary; with regard to *Time* and *Place*, the  
*Company* and *Manner of Speaking*, the *Tem-  
 pers* of Men, and the like: Otherwise even  
 this *best* Sort of Mockery is better let alone,  
 because it will certainly do more Hurt than  
 Good. But due Measures being observed,  
 it is a commendable Thing; and *thus* far,  
 and in *this* Sense, even a wise and religious  
 Man

Man may *make a mock at Sin*. Nay, *some* SERM.  
Vices of a greater and higher Nature are in III  
*part ridiculous*, and on *that Side* may be  
treated as such; as *Self-Conceit* above-men-  
tioned; one Sort of *Covetousness*, I mean  
the *niggardly* and the *sordid*; *Luxury*, and  
*some Kinds of Sensuality*. But then we must  
consider that they are *partly abominable* and  
*horrid* too, and beware of *mocking at* them  
on the *wrong Side*. It is to be here farther  
observed, that whatever *Folly*, *Fault*, or *Sin*  
may be treated *jocularly*, may likewise be  
treated *seriously*; and the Person guilty of  
it may and ought to be applied to *both ways*.  
But it is not so on the *reverse*: Many Vices  
are too *serious* to be *jested with*, they are *al-*  
*together horrid*; in *no View*, in *no Respect* *ri-*  
*diculous*; therefore *always* to be *gravely*, *ne-*  
*ver* to be *lightly* or *triflingly* spoken of.  
Which brings me, in the next Place,  
no 2. To *show positively*, in what the Pra-  
ctice here condemn'd does really consist.  
And this I will do, first in *general*, and then  
in *particular*.—In *general*, to *make a mock*  
*at Sin*, in the Sense here forbidden, is to  
treat it in a *light*, *trifling*, and *ludicrous*  
Manner; either with an *ill Design*, or so as  
to



SERM. to have it attended with *ill Consequences*, or

III. *both.* Thus in *general*: As to the *particular Instances* of it, they relate partly to *Others*, and partly to *Ourselves*. And they are *chiefly* these *Four*.

1. *RIDICULING* great and horrid Crimes in *Others*, so as to pretend to make them *contemptible*.

2. *MAKING* light of such Crimes in *Others*, and only *jesting* upon them, when we ought *severely* to *reprove* them.

3. *SCOFFING* at the *Follies*, *Faults*, or *Vices* of *Others*, whether great or small, in a *taunting* and *sarcastical* Manner, and in order not to *reform*, but to *grieve* and *vex* them.

4. *SPEAKING* of our own *Sins*, whether great or small, in a *ludicrous* and *sporting* Manner, with a *Design* to *boast* of them, rather than to *expose* them.

TOGETHER with these I do not reckon *exploding* the *Nature* of *Sin* or *Vice* in *general*, and representing it as a mere *Nullity*, or an *absurd Notion*: For though in these infidel Times even *this* Practice is very common, and it is certainly one Instance of that which is here forbidden and condemn'd;

demn'd; yet I pass it over, because it is of SERM.  
too general Consideration to be here insisted III.

upon. The Persons to whom this Character belongs are no better than downright Irreligious. Whoever denies the Being of *Vice* must deny the Being of *Virtue*; because he must deny the Being of any *Divine Law*, and consequently of all *Religion*. For since a Law may be broken as well as kept, if there can be no Transgression of a Law, i. e. *no Sin*, there can be no Law at all. This is necessarily the Train of these Men's Argumentation; and it is thus indeed that they themselves desire to be understood, while they laugh at the very *Nature* and *Existence* of Sin, as a senseless and absurd Notion. But my Business at present is not with those who are arrived at this Pitch of Folly and Wickedness, but with Scoffers at Sin of an *inferior* Class; viz. those who acknowledge the *Being* of it, and yet *make a mock* at it. Which, I say, we may do,

1<sup>st</sup>, By ridiculing *great* and *horrid* Crimes in *Others*, so as to pretend to make them *contemptible*. It is possible that this *may* be endeavour'd with a *good* Design, to render

SERM. Vice ridiculous, and so to promote the Ho-

III. nour of Virtue: But then it must be with a very *weak Judgment*; because what is attempted is either *impracticable*, or, if it were *effected*, would do infinite Mischief to Religion. It either *cannot* be done, or *ought not* to be done: Either of which is sufficient to condemn the Undertaking. Is it possible for the Wit of Man to make *Murder* and *Sacrilege*, *Blasphemy* and *Perjury*, ridiculous or contemptible? In *their own Nature* they are certainly quite otherwise; And therefore if they *can* be shewn in a contrary Aspect, yet in the *next* Place they *ought not*. If any Man be so destitute of all Sense, Reason, and Goodness, as to be capable of having them represented to him in a ridiculous Light; yet he is guilty of great Folly, or Sin, or both, who so represents them: Because it inverts the Natures of Things, and confounds the necessary Distinctions between them. And *that* indeed is most commonly the Intention of those who *make a mock at Sin* in the Instance I am now considering. If the most *horrid* and *atrocious* Crimes can be made *light* and *contemptible*, Religion must unavoidably suf-

fer by it. In these Cases neither the *Thing* SERM.  
nor the *Person*, neither the *Sin* nor the *Sin-* III.  
*ner*, ought to be *despised*: For nothing is  
truly *despicable*, but what is *inconsiderable*; as  
these are *not*. Neither will the *Pretence*,  
nor even the real *Design* of rendering them  
*ridiculous* justify this Practice. Some Things,  
it is true, may be *partly scorned*, and *partly*  
*bated*: But it is not so with *these*; they are  
altogether *horrid*; too *serious* to be *laugh'd*  
*at*, too *considerable* to be *despised*. Other  
Vices indeed there are, (as *Drunkenness*,  
and sometimes other Kinds of *Debauchery*)  
which though very *horrid*, are *less* so than  
those just now mentioned. To these *some-*  
*thing Ridiculous* may, and generally does ad-  
here: But then it is vastly exceeded and  
over-weigh'd by the *Odious* and *Detestable*;  
and therefore such Crimes ought by no  
means to be the Subject of *Mockery* and *Ri-*  
*dicule*, which are always more or less at-  
tended with *Mirth* and *Pleasantry*. And  
this brings me to the *second* Instance I men-  
tioned, *viz.*

2. MAKING light of *great* and *heinous*  
Crimes in *Others*, and only *jesting* upon  
them, when we ought severely to *reprove*



SERM. them. This Practice is distinct from the

III. *former*, inasmuch as *that* implies a *Design* (either *good* or *bad*) of exposing Sin to *Contempt*: This implies no such particular *Design*, but in general a *vain wicked Habit* of *Talking* and *Thinking*, and a great Want of religious Principles. When I say this, I am very sensible that Some, who are both by themselves and others esteemed *good Livers*, do yet give into this Way of unjustifiable Drollery. But, notwithstanding that, I stick to my Assertion, That whoever makes a Trifle of Wickedness in *another* is a wicked Man *himself*: The Reasons of which shall be given under my *Third* and *Last* General Head. For the Frequency of this Practice, we need only consult our own Experience and Observation. What makes a considerable Part of many Men's Conversation, but mutual Jestings upon one another's Vices, and thereby confirming and fortifying one another in them? And to this nothing has contributed more, than the Fashion of fixing a Set of new soft Names upon some of the most abominable Immoralities. And the Way being thus prepared by these foolish Names, it is the easiest Thing

Thing in the World to be very *facetious* SERM.  
with the Vices they stand to signify; which III.  
indeed, by virtue of these fantastical Words,   
are made to pass for no Vices at all. I shall  
instance in no Particulars under this *second*  
Division of my *First* General Head, daily  
Experience rendering it unnecessary. I  
therefore only observe further, that this Part  
especially of the Sin condemned in my *Text*  
may be, and often is, in a more *studied* and  
*elaborate* Way, as well as in Conversation;  
by *Writing* and *Acting*, as well as by  
*Speaking*.

3. A THIRD Instance I specified as a  
Branch of the Practice here condemn'd, is  
*Scoffing* at the *Follies*, *Faults*, or *Vices* of  
*Others* in a *taunting*, *sarcastical*, and *upbraid-*  
*ing* Manner, and in order not to *reform*, but  
to *grieve* and *vex* them; to make them not  
*wiser* or *better*, but more *miserable*. Sin is  
here consider'd partly under the Notion of  
a *Misfortune*, as indeed there is none great-  
er, and partly as a Thing *foul*, and *base*, and  
causing *Shame*: And with regard to *both*,  
the Person is *reproached* and *upbraided* by  
this Sort of *Mockery*. The *Nature* of which  
is as *plain*, as the *Practice* is *common*: And

SERM. so I shall say no more of it, but pass on to

III. the *fourth* and *last* Instance I mentioned,  
 which was,

4. SPEAKING of *our own Sins*, whether great or *small*, in a *ludicrous* and *sporting* Manner, with a Design rather to *boast* of them, than to *expose* them. However strangely it may sound, to *mock* at our own Vices is one Way of *glorying* in them: For as Men often ridicule the Follies, Faults, and Sins of *Others*, so they very seldom ridicule *their own*. I said *very seldom*; because it *may*, and sometimes, though very rarely, *does* happen, that a Man may *take Shame to himself* by this means, and design to shew his *Repentance* and *Reformation* by it. But then this is always in *small* Instances, never in *great* ones: Because if he truly repents of the *latter*, he knows they are not to be *jested with*. I mean if he be a Man of tolerable *Judgment*: For if he be not, I confess he may with a good Design endeavour to make his *own* greater Vices, of which he has been *formerly* guilty, appear ridiculous, as well as those of *Others*, of which they *formerly have been*, or *now are* guilty: Which relates to a *foregoing* Particular.

cular. But then in *this*, as well as in *that*, SERM. the Thing is *foolish in him*, and *wicked in* III. *itself*; however he may be *excusable*, for *want of understanding better*. But whether his Faults be *great or small*, if he *jests upon* them, with a Design to *boast of* them, (which is very common) he is in the *biggest* and *worst* Sense chargeable with the Practice here forbidden. I say this is very *common*: Which must be known to all who know the World, and the Wickedness of it. How often do we hear Men talking (in the *new-fashioned polite Jargon* above-mentioned) of their *Drunkenness*, their *Lewdness*, and the like, with great *Gaiety of Heart*, and in a most *jocose Air*, as if they were *rallying*, and *shrewdly reflecting upon themselves*; when every body *sees*, (and it is plain they intend and desire to be so *understood*) that it is altogether with a Design to *burnish* their *Character*, and *blazon* their *Accomplishments* to the whole Company. They talk of these Abominations as *Trifles*; but would be not a little mortified, if these *Trifles* should not be apprehended as *great and notable Exploits*.

THESE are, I conceive, the *chief* Branches of the Sin here forbidden in my *Text*.



SERM. Upon the *second* and *fourth* I farther observe

III. only *this*: That though I have stated the former as relating to *Others*, because it chiefly does so, yet it may in *some measure* relate to *Ourselves*, as the *latter entirely* does. That is to say, we are guilty of this Sin by speaking *lightly* and *ludicrously* of *our own Vices*, though it be without any Intention to *boast* of them. This I only *mention*, in order to be thoroughly clear, and to take every thing before us, as we go along: And to have barely mentioned it is sufficient.

HAVING thus endeavoured to explain the *Nature of Mocking at Sin*, as forbidden in the *Text*, I proceed in the *Second Place*,

II To point out the *Causes* which chiefly incline Men to it. Now these may be reduced to *six*; which it will be sufficient to mention.

1. AN *Affectation of Wit.*
2. A *wicked Life*, joined with the *Want of religious Principles.*
3. WANT of *Judgment.*
4. WANT of *Consideration.*
5. ILL-NATURE. And,
6. ILL-WILL to *Religion in general.*

THAT

THAT *most* of these are *Causes* of the SERM.  
Practice here condemned, may be collected III.

from what I have already said in explaining its *Nature*. The *Affectation of Wit* may run through *all* the several Instances of it which I mentioned; and generally does contribute, at least, to every one of them. *A wicked Life*, joined with the *Want* of religious Principles, must necessarily be supposed in that Man, who *mocks at his own Sins*, so as to *boast of* them. Ridiculing great and horrid Crimes in Others, so as to pretend to make them contemptible, must proceed from *Want* either of *habitual Judgment*, or of *present actual Consideration*, or from *ill Will to Religion in general*, and *ill Designs* against it. Nobody can be spitefully satyrical upon the Faults of his Neighbour, without being of an *ill-natured* and *cruel Disposition*. And *lastly*, to make light of great and atrocious Vices in Others, and to *jest* upon them, instead of severely *reproving* them, must proceed from *one* of these Causes, may proceed from *any one* or *more* of them, or from *all of them* together. These Things are too plain to be largely

or

SERM. or *distinctly* insisted upon: And so I pass on

III. to shew in the *Third* and *Last* Place,

III. THE *Folly* and *Wickedness* of this Practice. *Foolish* it is, *very often* at least, even in the *vulgar* Sense of the Word, but *always* in the *moral*. These *Jests* are *generally* dull and *insipid*, but *always* *wicked*: Which *latter* is the main Point to be *here* considered. In order to proceed the more clearly, I shall take some notice,

1<sup>st</sup>, OF *Jesting* in *general*.

2<sup>dly</sup>, OF *Jesting* upon *serious* Matters in *particular*.

3<sup>dly</sup>, AND more particularly, of *Jesting* upon the *Vices* of *Ourselves* or *Others*, of *making a Mock at Sin*: Which is the direct and immediate Subject of our present Discourse.

1<sup>st</sup>, FOR the *first* of these; it is not *universally* to be condemn'd, or even blamed: And that Man must be very *heavy* and *phlegmatick*, or very *sour* and *morose*, or *both*, who is offended at every thing that is chearful or facetious. When the *Apostle* warns us against *Jesting* \*, he plainly means not the  
Thing

\* Eph. v. 4.

Thing itself *absolutely* speaking; but only SERM.  
 such as is attended with *foolish*, i. e. sinful III.  
*Talking*, and is *not convenient*. The Thing  
 itself is *often innocent*, and *sometimes useful*,  
 and by no means to be wholly banish'd out  
 of Conversation. But then the *immoderate*  
*Jester* certainly falls under the Censure of  
 my *Text*: He does so too, if he be (which  
 does not always happen) a Man of *real Wit*,  
 and much more if he be *not*. Or if it were  
 otherwise, *all Wit* however does not (as  
 some People seem to imagine it does) con-  
 sist in *Jesting*: So far from it, that *this* at  
 best is only *one* Part of *that*, among many  
*more*, and that too the *easiest* and *lowest* Part  
 of it: Meaning by the Word, a short and  
 ludicrous *Saying*, upon some *Person* or *Thing*,  
 commonly attended with a sharp and pun-  
 gent *Reflection*. Now to be perpetually thus  
 jocular, will render a Man contemptible:  
 Because it is a *low* and *little* Employment,  
 and that in the Judgment of all reasonable  
 Persons. He *may* perhaps (and perhaps *not*  
*too*) *divert* the *Company*; but the *Company*  
 will certainly have no *Respect* for *him*: He  
 will be regarded as a *Droll by Trade*, an *in-*  
*genious Trifler* at best; and it is well if he  
 be



SERM. be not much *worse*. For, giving himself up

III. to this immoderate Humour of being jocular, he will be hindered by nothing: He will have his *Jest*, though *Decency* and *Modesty*, good *Manners* and good *Nature*, his *Friend*, his *Religion*, or his *God*, happen to stand in the Way. Which leads to the *second* Thing, *viz.*

2. JESTING upon *serious* Matters in particular. Even in *these* all Sorts of *Wit* are not to be set aside: Far from it. In the most weighty Concerns, our *Speech* may be *with Grace*, and yet *seasoned* even with this *Salt*: Nay many times it *ought* to be so, and cannot well have its due Effect *without* it. But then if upon these Subjects *Right Reason* does not exclude every thing that is *witty*, it excludes every thing that is *light*, and consequently every thing that is *jocular*: And whosoever is in a Habit of acting contrary to this Rule, is guilty both of grievous *Folly* and *Sin*. He who is *always* jesting even in *frivolous* Matters is a *Trifler*; but this Creature is a *Buffoon*: Nay *worse*; he is to all wise and good Men both *ridiculous* and *odious*. The Man that does not know, or speaks as if he did not know, what is *fit*

to

to be said in Jest, and what *not*, may be SERM.  
*called a Wit*, but is *really a Fool*. *Dulce est* III.  
*desipere in loco*, is, I confess, a Saying of the  
 greatest *Wit* \* that ever lived; and nothing  
 can be more true, or better Sense: But to  
 play the Fool in *undue Time* and *Place*, or  
 upon an *undue Subject*, is *to be a Fool indeed*.  
*A Word spoken in due Season*, (says the Wise  
 Man †) *how good is it!* And, by the Rule  
 of Contraries, a Word spoken *out of Season*,  
 how *bad* is it! A Person upon whom this  
 Fault is chargeable will not be heeded, even  
 when he is *serious*, if he ever be so: He  
 loses all *Authority*, when he is noted for a  
 Droll upon grave Subjects. Let him argue  
 never so clearly and strongly, he *convinces*  
 nobody, because nobody *minds* him: And  
 nobody is *minded*, who is not *respected*: And  
 nobody is *respected*, who has the Reputation  
 of a *Jester* in the most serious Debates. As  
 a Man who is notorious for *Lying* will not  
 be believed, even when he speaks *Truth*;  
 so he who has the Character of a *Buffoon* in  
 the most important Matters, will not be  
 attended to, even when he is never so much  
 in *earnest*. Then he does a great deal of  
 Mischief

\* HORACE.

† PROV. XV. 23.

SERM. Mischief in a Debate to that very Cause

III. which he endeavours to *defend*, if he really designs to defend *any*: And that by diverting the Question, and dissipating the Thoughts of superficial Thinkers: For such, though they do not attend to his *Arguments*, will attend to his *Drollery*. But farther: This Behaviour is not only *foolish*, and *childish*, and *mischievous*, but directly *wicked*. And the Sin is still greater, if the *Jesting* be not only upon *serious Matters*, but

3dly, AND more particularly, upon the *Vices of Ourselves*, or of *Others*: Which is *making a Mock at Sin*, the direct and immediate Subject of our present Discourse. What has been already said upon the *Folly* of *other* Instances of *vicious Jocular*ity may be applied to *this*, with the Addition of something *more*: But the *Wickedness* of *this* I shall here more *distinctly* consider. It may partly be collected from its *Causes*, which I have above assign'd, and which appear to be very *corrupt*. But besides that, the Thing is wicked in *itself*, or in *its own Nature*: And that for *two* Reasons; the *one* relating to *God*, the *other* to *Men*. To the *former* it is *Profaneness* to make a Jest of the Breach

of

of his Laws: As to the *latter*, it takes off SERM.  
from the *Terror, Abhorrence, and Grief*, III.  
with which Sin ought to affect them. 

FOR the *first*: Whoever respects the *Lawgiver* must respect the *Laws*, and whoever respects the *Laws* cannot think the *Violation* of them to be a proper Subject of *Mockery*. Who that has an awful Regard to the adorable Majesty of *the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity* \*, can see his Authority set at nought without Indignation and Resentment? I am sure it is so in respect of *Human* Authority: And is the Case altered, when it relates to the *Divine*? Or if it be, is it not much *stronger*? What can it be deem'd less than Profaneness to trifle with the Breach of his Laws, and laugh to see them trampled under Foot? Here we see is a manifest Connection between *Mocking at Sin*, and *Mocking at Religion*; inasmuch as they both proceed from the same Principle, *viz.* an impious Contempt of the Divine Authority. Thus as to *God*.

As to *Men*: To *mock at Sin* is both *irrational* and *wicked*; because it takes off  
from

\* *Isaiah* lvii. 15.



SERM. from the *Terror, Abhorrence, and Grief,*

III. with which Sin ought to affect them. For  
 Sin, according to the *true and real Nature*  
 of Things, is to be considered in a *threefold*  
 Aspect: As

*Formidable,*

*Detestable,*

*Deplorable.*

And is the most *dreadful of Enemies*, the most *odious of Monsters*, and the most *grievous of Misfortunes* to be *laugh'd at* or *despised*, or to be made the Object of *Sport* and *Ridicule*? Can it be so in *Others*? Can it be so in *Ourselves*? Common Sense gives a ready Answer to these Questions: And were it not for *one* great Folly and Fault in human Nature, which I have *above* mentioned, I mean *Want of Thought and Consideration*, the very Asking of such Questions would be absurd: And even as Things *now* are, the Case is so plain, that it would be superfluous to enlarge upon the Answers to them. The *Royal Psalmist* had a Notion of Things quite different from that of these *Mockers at Sin*, when he said, \* *Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes, because Men*  
*keep*

\* Psalm cxix. 136.

keep not thy Law. And so had the Prophet SERM.  
 Jeremy, when upon the same Subject he III.  
 broke out into this pathetical Exclamation,   
*O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes*  
*a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day*  
*and Night* \*! Thus with reference to Others,  
 and with reference to Ourselves: For Men  
 to droll upon their own Sins, so as to boast  
 of them, is that Height of Wickedness  
 mentioned by the Apostle, *whose Glory is in*  
*their Shame* †. And how horrid that is,  
 we need not take Pains to prove.

UPON the Whole; as the Roman Satyrift ‡  
 uses the Word *Reverence* in a Sense differ-  
 ent from the common Acceptation, when  
 he applies it to Children, *Maxima debetur*  
*puero reverentia*; so we may give it ano-  
 ther different Turn, by applying it to Sin,  
 and say,

*Maxima debetur vitio reverentia:*

Very great *Reverence* is due to *Vice* and  
*Wickedness*: Meaning here by that Word  
 not *Honour* and *Respect*, but a most solid  
 and serious *Regard*: For *Sin* is a *serious*  
 Thing, as well as *Virtue*; because *Misery* is

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so,

\* Jerem. ix. 1.

† Phil. iii. 19.

‡ JUVENAL;

SERM. so, as well as *Happiness*; and the *one* ought

III. no more to be trifled with than the *other*,

Nay (as I have already more than once hinted) whoever *makes a mock* at *either*, does in effect *make a mock* at *both*. I have observed that *both* proceed from the *same* Principle, *viz.* a Contempt of the Divine Authority: And I now add, that in their Consequences they mutually infer each other. That those who despise *Religion* must of course despise *Sin*, is self-evident: And that to *contemn* *Sin* must tend not only to the *Contempt*, but to the *Destruction* of *Religion*, is plain from hence, that the Prevalence of the *one* is the Ruin of the *other*; and prevail the *former* must, if it be not look'd upon as frightful, odious, and detestable in its *Consequences*; since as to *itself*, and its *immediate* Appearance, our corrupt Nature is so strongly prejudiced in its Favour. Take away the *Horror* of *Vice*, and you of course destroy *Virtue*: Or in different Words, take away *Reverence* from *that* in *one* Sense, (as above explain'd) and you take away *Reverence* from *this* in *another*. Whoever loves *Virtue* indeed must necessarily

rily *bate Vice*; but it does not follow, that SERM.  
 whoever *honours the one* must *despise the* III.  
*other*: So far from it, that for the Reasons  
 alledged the direct *Contrary* is true. For  
 there is this great Difference between the  
 two Cases: *Love* and *Hatred* are Terms of  
*Opposition*; so that we must *bate* the *Contra-*  
*ry* to what we *love*: But *Honour* and *Con-*  
*tempt* are not so. We *honour* a great good  
 Man, but we do not therefore *despise* a  
 great *wicked* Man: On the contrary, we  
*bate* his *Qualities*, *fear* his *Person*, and *grieve*  
 for *both*: At least we *ought* to do so, and  
 judge very erroneously if we do *not*. Nay,  
 a Man *despicable* upon other Accounts be-  
 comes *considerable* by being very *wicked*; be-  
 cause *Wickedness* itself is a Thing of great  
*Moment* and *Importance*. In the *Roman*  
 Language the same Word (*sacer*) is applied  
 both to *Religion* and to *Vice*, and signifies  
 both *sacred* and *execrable*; implying that  
 these two, however *contrary* in *other* Re-  
 spects, agree in *this*, that they are *both* of a  
 most *serious* and *important* Nature.

I HAVE now gone through the *Three*  
 Heads I laid down, and have this to observe



SERM. from the *Whole*: That *Vices* relating to *Con-*

III. *versation* (as this does chiefly, though not solely) are to be guarded against with the utmost Care and Caution. The *Mischief* done by them is incredible; because they fortify Men in one another's Sins; and yet are little minded, because they are scatter'd and dispersed among Numbers. And more particularly the Danger from criminal Jocularity is very great, because it is from Jocularity: The Thing was said in jest, and so goes for nothing, and passes off without Reflection. Whereas were it but known to those on *Earth* how many Thousands have jested themselves into *Hell*, it is to be presumed that the World would be more serious than it is, and consequently more Souls would be eternally happy in *Heaven*. With a View to both final States, let us, while we are in this probationary one, seriously consider, that our merry vicious Mockery, if persisted in, and unrepented of, will draw upon ourselves the most dreadful and tremendous Mockery, that can possibly be conceived or imagined, even that of an incensed and avenging God: Who under the  
 Name

Name and Title of *Wisdom*, in this very **SERM.**  
*Book* of which my *Text* is a Part, expresses **III.**  
himself thus: *Because—ye have set at nought*  
*all my Counsels, and would none of my Re-*  
*proof; I also will LAUGH at your Calamity,*  
*I will MOCK when your Fear cometh.\**

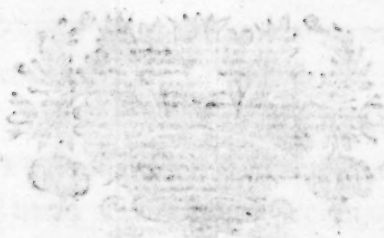
Now to God the Father, &c.

\* Prov. i. 25, 26.



Name and Title of Work in this way  
 List of which my Text is a Part, except the  
 I will then: I want — a large list of names  
 of my Country, and would send of my  
 work. I also call upon of your Country  
 I will make some few remarks  
 Now to God the Father, &c.

How I am to



SEP

F 3

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## SERMON IV.

Of being overtaken in a  
Fault:

AND

Of restoring such a one in  
the Spirit of Meekness.

The *First* Sermon on this Subject.

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GAL. VI. I.

*Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in  
a Fault, ye which are spiritual  
restore such a one in the Spirit of  
Meekness; considering thyself, lest  
thou also be tempted.*

**T**HE great Design of St. Paul's SERM.  
writing this Epistle was to correct IV.  
the Error of the *Judaizing Chri-*  
*stians*; to shew that the *Mosaic Rites* and



SERM. Ceremonies were utterly abolish'd by the

IV. Gospel; that the *Faith of Christ* is the only

Means, on our Part, by which eternal Life can be obtained; and that *by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified\**. But here, as in all other his Doctrinal and Controversial Writings, he takes care perpetually to intersperse the Precepts of Evangelical Morality, and to press and inculcate the absolute Necessity of a holy Life. Which alone, were there no more to be said upon the Subject, would be sufficient to correct the Error of the *Solifidians*, and to prove that by the *justifying Faith of Christ* he all along means the *Whole of Christianity*, not *Faith* considered as a single and solitary Virtue. Accordingly in the foregoing Chapter he gives a particular Account of the Works of the Flesh, and those of the Spirit. Now the Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Lasciviousneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings, and ſuch like: Of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in

\* Gal. ii. 16.

Time past, that they which do such Things SERM.  
shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But IV.

the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace,   
Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith,  
Meekness, Temperance; against such there is  
no Law\*. Where we may observe by the  
way, that Faith consider'd as a single Vir-  
tue, and as *distinct* from all others, is rec-  
kon'd but as *one* of the *Fruits of the Spirit*,  
as *one* Condition of our Salvation, *among*  
*many more*, and not the *only one*, (as some  
would have it) and all the rest are enume-  
rated as concurring with it, and as much  
the *Fruits of the Spirit* as *Faith* itself. But  
now, lest the *Apostle* having pronounced  
*that they which do such Things*, such wicked  
Things as were before mention'd, as the  
*Works of the Flesh*, shall not inherit the King-  
dom of God, should be misapprehended as  
excluding from Heaven all those who any  
way commit Sin, he adds in the Words of  
my Text, which are the Beginning of the  
next Chapter, *Brethren, if a Man be over-*  
*taken, &c. Those who do such Things*  
*shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, i. e.*  
those who do them *presumptuously* and *ha-*  
*bitually*,

\* Gal. v. 19, 20, &c.

SERM. *bitually*, and do not throughly and sincerely

IV. *repent* of them: But not every body that falls into *any Sin*, of what Kind soever. Against which Misunderstanding my Text is a Caution; and in it are comprised *two Things*: 1<sup>st</sup>, The *State* and *Condition* of some certain Persons, who fall into Sin; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, The *Treatment* or *Behaviour* which ought to be shewn them by *Others*. The *former* respects the Circumstances of those who are by the *Apostle* said to be *overtaken in a Fault*: And the *latter* includes these *Particulars* with relation to them:

1. A *Duty* to be performed. *Restore such a one.*

2. THE *Persons* who are to perform it. *Ye which are spiritual.*

3. THE *Manner* in which it is to be perform'd. *In the Spirit of Meekness.* And,

4. A *Reason* why it should be so perform'd. *Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

Now *both* those *general* Points, with the several *Particulars* contained in the *latter*, will, I presume, be fully discuss'd by the distinct Consideration of these *Four Heads* of Discourse.

I. WHAT is meant by a Man's being overtaken in a Fault.

II. WHAT by restoring such a one, and that in the Spirit of Meekness; together with the Duty of both.

III. WHAT by spiritual Persons; and why that Duty is peculiarly incumbent upon them.

IV. THE Reasons why those who are so overtaken should be restored, and that in so tender a Manner; especially that Reason which is here alledged by the Apostle: *Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

ALL which Particulars I shall dispatch in their Order; and then,

V. MAKE some Observations or Reflections upon them.

I. AND first for the First of these: What is meant by a Man's being overtaken in a Fault. *Ἐὰν καὶ προληφθῇ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῇ παραπτώματι.* If he be *præoccupatus*, (as the *Latins* render it) *anticipated, prevented, surprized* before he was aware, or had Time to consider: But a better Word cannot be found to express it  
in



76      *Of being overtaken in a Fault,*

SERM. in our Language, than that which our

IV. *Translators* have chosen, viz. *overtaken*. It

denotes a *sudden Seizure*, to extenuate the Crime; which is supposed not to be committed out of *Malice*, or upon any *form'd* Design and Purpose. Others translate it *deprehensus fuerit*, if he be *catch'd, taken*, or *found out* in a Fault: And though it is true that the Word will bear that Sense, and the Sense too is good, yet the *other* Interpretation is far preferable. *In a Fault*; or rather, *in any Fault*: ἢ τινι παραπτώματι. The Word *literally* signifies a *Slip*, or *Stumble*, and therefore in the *metaphorical* Sense implies such Faults as are of the lesser Kind, and proceed from Weakness or Inadvertency. The Sins here meant then are of *two* Sorts; Sins of *Ignorance*, and Sins of *Infirmity*. Those of the *first* Kind are the most excusable, if the Ignorance were *involuntary* and *invincible*. But these indeed do not so properly belong to our present Subject, as those of the second Denomination; because a Man cannot be so truly and strictly said to be *overtaken*, when he does a Thing in itself unlawful *without knowing* it to be so; as when he does it, and *habitually*

*actually knows* it to be unlawful, though at SERM.  
*that very Time* he does not *actually attend to* IV.  
that Knowledge.

AND therefore, 2dly, Sins of *Infirmity* are here more particularly and directly pointed at by the *Apostle*. And these a Man may commit *two Ways*; either by *sudden Surprise*, or *insensible Gradation*. In the *former Case*, a Temptation may suddenly and unexpectedly present itself, with all the advantageous Circumstances imaginable; when the Mind is unprovided, and off its Guard; when the Blood and Spirits are most aptly disposed to receive it; and when it is of such a peculiar Turn and Cast as to be most agreeable to the Constitution of the Person tempted. By such an unhappy Concurrence of Incidents, a Man, virtuous in the main, may *plunge himself at once* into the Guilt of an unlawful Action, purely upon a *Surprise*, and without having Time to call in the Succours of Reason and Religion. In the *other Case*, a Man *imperceptibly and gradually slides* into a Fault, without considering what he is doing, or whether he is going. And this happens *chiefly* in those Sins to which he has *no Inclination*,  
but

78 *Of being overtaken in a Fault,*

SERM. but rather *the contrary*. And here it must

IV. be observed, that the *Sensitive Appetite* chiefly is the Seat of Sins of *Infirmity*; and the *Passions*, or *Affections*, (which belong chiefly to that Appetite) are the *main*, if not the *only* Incentives to them. *Covetousness*, *Injustice*, and the like, would but vainly lay Claim to that *lessening Title*. To ruin our Neighbour's Reputation, or rob him of his Estate, is a *strange Infirmity* indeed: That Man must in a *different Sense* be very *weak*, who pretends to be thought so in *this*; and, while he is *over-reaching another*, imagines he is *over-taken himself*. The Sins therefore of which we are now speaking properly belong to the *Passions*; and that both to the *Iracible*, (as the *Schools* speak) such as Anger, Fear, and Grief; and to the *Concupiscible*, as Love, Joy, Desire, and the like; which being work'd upon and solicited by the Devil, or the Flesh, or both, frequently *draw* us or *plunge* us into Sin and Folly.

BUT then we ought to be further satisfied that those which we call Sins of *Infirmity* are *really* so, *i. e.* that they proceed from the *Affections* more than from the *Will*; from *Surprize*, or *Unwariness*, more than  
from

from a *fix'd and settled Temper*. And that SERM. 2  
they may be proved to be such, they must IV.  
be, 

1. Of the *smaller Kind*; (at least generally speaking.)

2. Not long persisted in, nor often repeated.

As to the *first* of these Requisites: Great and atrocious Crimes, however suddenly or thoughtlessly committed, (if it be possible, which I much doubt, that they should be so committed) cannot (*generally speaking at least*) be call'd Sins of *Infirmity*, nor the Person who commits any one of them be said to be *overtaken in a Fault*. I say, *generally speaking at least*, for a Reason which I shall assign before I conclude this Particular. At present I say, Should a Man commit Murder or Adultery, though the *first* in never so great a *Passion*, and the *other* upon never so sudden a *Temptation*, these would be *wilful* Sins, not Sins of *Infirmity*: Because these Enormities are in *themselves* of so black and horrid a Nature, *Peccata vastantia conscientiam*, (as a learned Writer expresses it) *Sins laying waste the Conscience*, and almost tearing up the very Principles of  
of



80 *Of being overtaken in a Fault,*

SERM. of Virtue by the Roots, Sins involving such

IV. a Complication of abominable Circumstances, that no Man is capable of even *once* committing them, whose Mind is not before exceedingly corrupted and debauched. These are Crimes; *one Act* of which amounts to an *Habit*, or rather *supposes* one; not so properly indeed an *Habit* of *that* Crime itself, as an evil *Habit* upon the *Whole*, and taking one thing with another. It shews the Man to be if not habitually *guilty of that Sin*, yet to be habitually in a *bad State*. And if this Distinction were duly attended to, the Doctrine of the *Schools* in this Point would, I believe, be more clear and more true with it, than it is (as it is commonly stated) without it. *David's* Adultery, notwithstanding the *Suddenness* of it, was *wilful*; and his Murder was not only *wilful*, but to the last Degree *presumptuous*. And here I am sensible it may be reasonably objected, Was *he* then habitually in a bad State, as he must be according to this Doctrine? If he *was*, how could he, upon the whole, be a *Man after God's own Heart*? I answer, It is *one Thing* to be *habitually in a bad State*, and *another* to be *upon the whole*  
a bad

*a bad Man*: The *one* may relate only to a SERM.  
*certain Time*; the *other* must relate to the IV.  
*main Course of his Life*, and especially to  
the *Conclusion* of it. That Habits, even ac-  
quired, are contracted by many repeated  
Acts, is a Proposition which does not hold  
*universally* true: A Man, who has long been  
of a very healthy Constitution, may by one  
Surfeit, and in a very short Time, contract  
an ill Habit of Body, which may be the  
Occasion of one, or of many subsequent  
Distempers, even more dangerous than the  
first which induced that ill Habit; though  
after all he may recover, and be in the  
main, through the whole Course of his  
Life, taking one Part of it with another, a  
very healthy Man. And as it is with the  
Body, so it is with the Mind: *David* there-  
fore might by some former Sin, or Sins,  
though of a much *inferior* Nature, and for  
that Reason not recorded in Scripture, have  
for some Time turn'd the Bent of his Soul  
the wrong way, before his Adultery with  
*Bathsheba*, and his Murder of *Uriah*: Of  
both which he severely repented; which,  
being added to his sincere Love of God,  
and a virtuous Life in the main, might just-

SERM. ly denominate him *a Man after God's own*

IV. *Heart.* Though in that Character given

*of him the flagrant Crimes we are now considering are expressly excepted: David did that which was right in the Eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the Days of his Life, save only in the Matter of Uriah the Hittite.\** Not but that *David* was guilty of many other Sins of a different Kind; but these only are mentioned: Which proves them to be, as I have said, Sins *wilful* and *presumptuous*, not, as his other Sins were, only of *Ignorance* or *Infirmity*. These horrid Crimes then, I say, *generally* at least, even in one Act *presuppose* a vicious Habit; because that Mind which has not such an Horror for them, as to be an Over-balance for any Surprize or Temptation, how great soever, is in all Probability extremely vitiated and depraved. *Other* Sins (which are really Sins of *Infirmity*) are generally so many Scars, or slight Wounds to the Soul, which by common Care may be easily healed; but such a one as *this* is a deep, dangerous, and (if exceeding Care be not

*taken*  
\* 1 Kings xv. 5.

taken of it) a *mortal Stab*. Even such as SERM.  
these indeed *may be cured*; for the greatest IV.  
presumptuous Sins (except *one*, which I  
think can scarce be now committed, I mean  
that against the *Holy Ghost*) are not abso-  
lutely unpardonable. Nay, those who com-  
mit Sins of the most horrid Nature are to  
be *restored* by *spiritual Persons*, and that too  
in the *Spirit of Meekness*, at least *not* in a  
Manner *contrary to it*; though they ought  
not to be treated in the same Manner with  
those who are more directly the Subject of  
our present Discourse: Of which more in  
its proper Place.

I SAID, Sins of *Infirmity* must generally  
*speaking* at least be of the *smaller Kind*; be-  
cause *it is possible* that a very great and  
grievous Crime may be one of Infirmity.  
St. *Peter's*, in denying his Lord and Master,  
is commonly rank'd among those of that  
Class: But perhaps it is the only Instance  
of the Kind that can be given; and *Fear*  
perhaps is the only Passion which can en-  
title so heinous a Sin to that Denomination.  
Certain it is, that those Sins which proceed  
from the *concupiscible Affections* have less to  
plead in their Excuse: *Lust*, of all Things,



## 84      *Of being overtaken in a Fault,*

SERM. will not excuse them; which was *David's*

IV. Case. *St. Peter's* indeed was rather a Con-  
 ~~~~~sequence of the Sin of *Presumption* in its  
 own precise Nature, as constituting a Sin by
 itself, and as distinct from all others; than
 a Sin of Presumption, so call'd by reason
 of some external Circumstances giving it that
 Denomination, and common to that with
 many more Sins. He presumed too far upon
 his own Strength, after the repeated Warn-
 ings of him who best knew what was in
 Man; and so was secure, confident, and
 unguarded; and that betray'd him into so
 enormous a Transgression. For we must
 carefully observe, that there is a wide Dif-
 ference between the internal and abstracted
 Nature of the Sin itself distinguishing it
 from all others, and certain external Circum-
 stances with which it may be invested, giv-
 ing it this or that Modification and Name in
 common with many more. Now these latter
 make the Distinction of Sins into those of
Ignorance, Infirmary, and Presumption: And
 thus the Sin of *Presumption* itself may some-
 times be not a presumptuous Sin. This was
St. Peter's Case: He was guilty of the Sin
 of *Presumption* in depending too much upon
 his

and of restoring such a one, &c. 85

his own Strength, and that Sin was fol-
lowed by a worse, viz. the Denial of *Christ*; SERM. IV.
but neither was a presumptuous Sin; the
former proceeding from Thoughtlessness and
Inconsideration, and the *latter* from the
sudden Surprize of Fear. And so on the
other hand, *Ignorance* itself may be a pre-
sumptuous Sin; as it always is, if it be wil-
ful and affected.

Now the Question is, Whether *all* Sins
equally and indifferently, be they great or
small in their own Natures, may belong to
either of these Classes respectively? No
doubt *small* ones may be Sins of *Presum-
ption*, as it will appear from my *next* Partic-
ular; and *great* ones *sometimes*, though ve-
ry rarely, Sins of *Infirmity*. I say this *last-
mentioned* can, I think, be but *rarely*; be-
cause Sins of *Infirmity* (i. e. those which
partake more of the *Passions*, than of the
Will, or of the *Understanding*) can hardly
be supposed to be such as involve so horrid
a Complication of vicious Ingredients in
their own Nature. The *Will* (for the Rea-
son above alledged) must have the greatest
Part, though the *Understanding* and *Af-
fections* may have their Share, and not be
G 3 wholly

SERM. wholly excluded. I said above, that some

IV. horrid and flagitious Crimes (particularly those I mentioned) *amount* to a Habit, or rather *suppose* one, and therefore are conceived to be always *wilful*. But if a great and grievous Sin *can* be a Sin of *Infirmity*, (as 'tis possible it may) I now add, that such a Sin, though it does not *suppose* a Habit, may *make* one. I say *may*, for it does not necessarily follow that it *must*. A Man (according to the Comparison above-mention'd) by *unwarily* falling into *one* Surfeit may contract an ill *Habit of Body*: He *may*, but he *may not* too: By great Care, and the immediate Application of proper Medicines, he may presently recover, and prevent the ill Consequences of that Distemper. This, in the Application of the Similitude, was St. Peter's Case: The Contrary (as I said) in all Probability was *David's*.

BUT though those Crimes which I mentioned, and such like, cannot (as I think) be Sins of *Infirmity*, (or if they can, as we must always remember, it matters little; since, call them by what Names you will, they are of a most flagrant Nature, and, unless they are severely repented of, will infal-

infallibly plunge the Offenders into Hell-SERM.
fire:) yet those which have only a *Tendency* IV.
to them may be, and often are, no more
than Sins of *Infirmity*, in the Circumstances
of *Surprize* or *Carelessness* above-mention'd.
A Man solicited by strong Temptations may
indulge himself in some Actions, which are
in themselves unlawful, and directly *tend to*
the most grievous Sins, and yet be only *over-*
taken in a Fault. Nay, he may *impercepti-*
bly fall into the *gross Acts* of some Sins,
which, if they were *habitual*, would be
exceeding sinful; and yet sin only by *Infir-*
mity: Provided,

2. THEY be not *long persisted in*, nor *often*
repeated. But here we must observe, by
way of Caution, that there are some Words
and Actions, which, though in themselves
sinful, (as every thing is which has the *least*
Obliquity from the Law of God) yet are
scarce considerable enough to be call'd *Sins*;
so far, I mean, as we can make any Use of
that Name, with reference to our Conduct
and Behaviour: Because it is next to im-
possible to *remember*, or even to *observe* them.
For these a *general* Repentance is sufficient,
in the Words of the Royal Psalmist: *Who*

SERM. can understand his Errors? Cleanse thou me

IV. from secret Faults *. The very frequent Repetition of these (though even these we ought to avoid as much as possible, for we cannot be too careful) amounts perhaps to no more than to *one Sin of Infirmary*. But however that be, (for 'tis impossible to weigh *Moral* Notions by Grains and Scruples) those which are *ordinarily* and *properly* called Sins of *Infirmary*, (i. e. those which, though they proceed from sudden Passions and human Frailty, are yet considerable enough to be taken notice of, and give a Shock to our Innocence and Virtue) those, I say, which are *properly* called so, if they are *long* persisted in, or *often* repeated, *cease to be so*. If a Man in a Passion has slander'd his Neighbour, though the Words were utter'd in a Moment, yet if for a long time he insists upon it that he was in the right, though he never repeats the Words, he then either slanders him coolly and deliberately, or his Passion (if it be really such) is too *lasting* to be called an *Infirmary*. And then again, though a Person of such a choleric Temper does immediately recant, and

* Psalm xix. 12.

and beg Pardon for his Offence, yet if he SERM.
often repeats it, he cannot be said to be IV.
overtaken in a Fault, or to sin only by *In-*
firmity. That a Man is of a *passionate Tem-*
per, is his *Infirmity*; that he *indulges* it, is
his *Fault*; and that not of *Infirmity*, but of
Presumption. Nay it is granted, that to
be guilty of *some considerable Faults* proceed-
ing from that Temper may still be only an
Infirmity; but to *repeat them frequently* is
wilful, and *inexcusable*: For if we are al-
lowed thus to follow the Guidance of our
blind and mad Passions, to what Purpose
were Reason and Religion given us? And
what is the Difference between a wild Beast
and a Man? It is commonly said that *good-*
natured Men are often passionate, and 'tis true:
But then it is always understood of *little*
short-lived Passions, and such as have no
great Harm in them; not of Rage and Fu-
ry, not of Railing and Abusiveness: These,
especially if the Returns of them are *fre-*
quent, are as inconsistent with *good Nature*,
as they are with *good Manners*. It is true
indeed there is such a Thing as cool Ma-
lice; and many a one who is scarce ever
angry, is always *ill-natured*. But notwith-
standing

SERM. standing that, it is often otherwise: A Man

IV.  may rave with his Lips, and at the same time have Malice in the Depth of his Heart. And yet it seems to be the Opinion of some, that they cannot be *malicious*, because they are *outrageous*. Which is just as reasonable as to say, that the Sea in a Storm cannot be *deep* at the *Bottom*, because it *roars* and *foams* at the *Top*.

BUT to return from this, which is a little digressive from the Particular we are now considering, though not from the main Subject of my Discourse: In all Instances relating both to the *Iracible* and the *Concupiscible Affections*, the frequent Repetition even of those Actions which have *only a Tendency* to some *great Sin* renders them wilful and presumptuous. If a Man abstains from the gross Commission of Fornication or Adultery, yet if he often indulges himself in such Actions, Words, or even Thoughts, which directly tend and lead to them, he sins not by *Infirmity* only, but by *Presumption*. This is enough to shew his Mind to be vitiated and debauched; and he would commit the grossest Acts, were it not either for want of Opportunity, or for the Fear
of

and of restoring such a one, &c. 91

of Men, more than of God; and for the SERM.
Shame and Upbraidings of the World, more IV.
than of his own Conscience. And if it be
so in the *Tendencies only* to *some* great and
grievous Sins, it is more *plainly* so, though
not *more* so, in the *finish'd* and *consummate*
Acts of *others*, though in themselves of an
inferior Nature.

HAVING thus consider'd largely and particularly, as the Importance of the Subject required, What is *meant* by a Man's being *overtaken in a Fault*; I come now to my *Second* General Head, under which I am to consider,

II. WHAT is *meant* by *Restoring*, and that *in the Spirit of Meekness*; together with the Duty of *both*. But this must be deferr'd to some other Opportunity.

SERMON

of men, more than of God; and for the same reason, more and upholding of the Word, more than of his own Conscience. And it is to be observed, that the Word is not to be rejected, though it is not to be received, in the same manner as the Word is to be received, though it is not to be rejected. And it is to be observed, that the Word is not to be rejected, though it is not to be received, in the same manner as the Word is to be received, though it is not to be rejected.

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SERMON V.

Of being overtaken in a
Fault:

AND

Of restoring such a one in
the Spirit of Meekness.

The Second Sermon on this Subject.

GAL. VI. I.

*Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in
a Fault, ye which are spiritual
restore such a one in the Spirit of
Meekness; considering thyself, lest
thou also be tempted.*

I COME now (as I proposed) to my Sa- SERM.
cond General Head, under which I am V.
to consider,

II. WHAT is meant by *Restoring*, and
that in the *Spirit of Meekness*; together with
the

SERM. the Duty of both. *Kalamazoo*: The Latin

V. Translation renders it *instruite*, instruct. But though that be the Sense at the Bottom, yet it is not a Translation of the Word; which literally signifies to fit, or refit; and is almost appropriated to the setting of a Bone, when it is out of joint. As to the Obligation of this, the Places of Scripture both in the Old and New Testament concerning fraternal Correction, or admonishing our Brethren of their Faults, are too numerous to be particularly cited. It is our indispensable Duty to remind others of theirs: Love (truly understood) cannot hinder us from it, and Fear ought not. No Consideration whatsoever can justify our Neglect of this: Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him*. There are indeed many and great Errors about this, as there are about most Things. To perform this difficult Task as it should be, is a Work of great Judgment and Discretion: A due and prudent Regard being always to be had to Time, Place, the Quality of the Persons, and other Circumstances, especially that last mentioned; which yet perhaps is of all the least minded:

* Levit. xix. 17.

mind^{ed}: It being not uncommon for the ^{SERM.} more *ignorant* to reprove and instruct the ^{V.} more *knowing*, and that too in Things of a doubtful and difficult Nature; and for *Inferiors* to correct and chastise their *Betters*; and both with the most insolent and pragmatical Air imaginable. Which suggests the most material Circumstance of all, the *Manner* of performing this Task; with reference to which great Care must be taken that it be done in the *Spirit of Meekness*: Which is the *other* Thing to be consider'd under this *second* Particular.

It must be done indeed with *Faithfulness* and *Sincerity*; without lessening the *Offence*; to sooth and oblige the *Offender*. But all this may very well be, and yet it may be performed without Moroseness of Temper, or Asperity of Expression; without bitter Upbraidings, or unnecessary, nay false Aggravations; to heighten the Crime, and make it worse than it really is; without Severity and Harshness; without an assuming Air, and a Face of Authority. On the contrary we ought to admonish such a one softly and tenderly; to deal gently with his Infirmities, and, as the *Apostle* expresses it in the

96 *Of being overtaken in a Fault,*

SERM. next Verse, to bear one another's Burdens.

V. The *Obligation* incumbent upon us to perform this Duty in the *Manner* recommended in my *Text*, arises not only from the frequent Precepts and Commands of the *Gospel*, the very Spirit and Temper of which is *Gentleness*, *Goodness* *, and *Forbearing one another in Love* †; but even from the first Principles of *Humanity* itself. And the Case being so plain, I shall say no more upon it, but proceed to my *Third* General Head, in which I am to consider,

III. WHAT is meant by *spiritual Persons*, and why the *Duty* of thus restoring others is peculiarly incumbent upon them. These then are, *first* and *chiefly*, the *Ministers of Christ*; who are *spiritual Persons* *κατ' ἔξοχον*, in the most eminent and extraordinary Manner, by reason of their *Function*, which is of a *spiritual Nature*. And to these particularly belongs the *Spirit of Meekness* in some Cases, as well as the *Rod* in others: For to himself, as to a Governor of the Church, St. Paul ‡ applies both those Expressions. It is *their* Business more especially

* Gal. v. 22.

† Eph. iv. 2.

‡ 1 Cor. iv. 21.

cially to restore the Lapsed, and they are SERM.
virtute officii obliged to it. And though V.
 the *Apostle's* Argument, *Considering thyself*
lest thou also be tempted, (of which more in
 its proper Place) be not applicable to them
 more than to others, perhaps not *so much*,
 in the full Sense in which the Word *tempted*
 is here used; yet it is applicable to them,
 as well as to others: They are *Men of like*
Passions, and of the same corrupt Nature
 with the general Mass of Mankind. Being
tempted indeed sometimes signifies *falling by*
Temptation, being foil'd and overcome by it;
 and so it is actually used in this very Place,
 as I shall shew hereafter. And in this Sense
 also it *may be* applied to the Ministers of
Christ: They are *capable* not only of being
attack'd by the Devil, but of being *con-*
quered by him too; though, other Circum-
 stances being equal, not *so likely* to be con-
 quer'd by him as *others*. *Notwithstanding*
 this Argument therefore, they *may be* the
spiritual Persons here intended; and from
 the *spiritual Nature* of their Office it is most
 probable that they *peculiarly are* so. But
 though they *especially are* here intended,
 yet not they *only*: But likewise,

98 *Of being overtaken in a Fault,*

SERM. 2dly, ALL *sincere Christians*; all those who
 V. are good and *pious in the main*; who follow
 the Guidance of the Holy Spirit more than
 others; the strong and robust in Grace and
 Virtue. Parallel therefore to this Place is
 that of the same Apostle: *We that are strong
 ought to bear the Infirmities of the weak**.
 It is the Duty of all such, whether *Laic* or
Ecclesiastic, (though more especially of the
latter) to raise the Fallen, to recall the
 Wandring, to correct the Errors of their
 Brethren, and endeavour to reclaim them
 with Gentleness and Good-nature.

As for those who are *spiritual* neither in
Profession nor *Practice*, but *temporal* in the
one, and *carnal* in the *other*; if their Vices
 are of a *private* Nature, so as not to give
 Scandal or Offence, they do well in admon-
 ishing their Neighbours for their Faults:
 Though at the same time they must *be past
 feeling*, if their Consciences do not severely
smite them for not having reformed their
own.

BUT if their Crimes be *publick* and *noto-
 rious*, may they *then* reprehend others? I
 answer, They *may* if they please; But they
 are

* Rom. xv. 1.

are very impudent if they do. I cannot say **SERM.**
it is *unlawful*, but I am sure it is *improper*. **V.**

It does not look like an *Admonition*, but like
a *Jest*: Nay it is very often *intended* to be
so, by those *Fools* who *make a mock* both at
Sin and *Virtue*: And this is not only *un-*
lawful, but *impious*. And even when it is
otherwise, when it is really designed as a *se-*
rious Reprehension, such a Man would do
well to reflect upon that more serious Re-
prehension given to *himself* by our *Blessed*
Saviour: *Why beholdest thou the Mote that is*
in thy Brother's Eye, and considerest not the
Beam that is in thine own Eye? Or *how wilt*
thou say to thy Brother, Let me pull out the
Mote out of thine Eye; and behold a Beam is
in thine own Eye? *Thou Hypocrite, first cast*
out the Beam out of thine own Eye; and then
shalt thou see clearly to cast out the Mote out
of thy Brother's Eye *. *Spiritual* Persons
then are the *proper* Persons to perform the
Task of *restoring* others, recommended in
my *Text*; and even *they* ought to do it in
the *Spirit* of *Meekness*.

IV. For *several* Reasons, and particularly
for *that* here specified by the *Apostle*: *Con-*

sidering

H 2 *Matth. vii. 3, 4, 5.*

100 *Of being overtaken in a Fault,*

SERM. *considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

V. Which was the *Fourth* Thing I proposed to
 speak to.

Now these Reasons relate partly to the Persons *reproved*, and partly to the Persons *reproving*. As to the *Reproved*, they are supposed not to require a rough and rigorous Treatment: They are only *overtaken* by Carelessness, or Surprize; their Faults are only of *Infirmity*; and the Constitution of their Souls is soft and tender. And though a Patient in an *Apoplexy* must be plied with Caustics and Scarifications, yet less violent Remedies are to be applied to less inveterate and dangerous Distempers. Then as to the Persons *reproving*: If they do not proceed in the Method here prescribed, they defeat one half of the *End* which they ought to *propose*, and *commit Sin themselves*, by endeavouring to *correct* it in *others*. Nothing is more contrary to the Spirit of the *Gospel*, than the Spirit of *Censoriousness*; of which those are generally, if not always, guilty, who are rigorous in their Reproofs: To be severe upon one's Neighbour for real, but not great, Faults, being near akin to censuring him for Things which are no Faults

at

and of restoring such a one, &c. 101

at all. And not only the *Charity* of a *Christian*, but the *Generosity* of a *Man*, prescribes a Behaviour directly contrary to *both*. SERM. V.

BUT the *chief* Argument of all is that which is here urged by the Apostle: *Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* And it was not for nothing that he *changed the Number* from the *Plural* to the *Singular*: *Ye which are spiritual, &c. Considering thyself, &c.* This he says, not for want of Skill in the Language; but the Change of the Number is *emphatical* and *elegant*, as some Deviations from the common Rules very often are: And the *Apostle's* Design by it was undoubtedly to apply *closely*, and *distinctly*, to the *Conscience* of every *particular* Person *by himself*; which is most strongly and effectually done, by making a Transition from the *Plural* Number to the *Singular*. *Consider thyself* therefore, whosoever thou art, *lest thou also be tempted*: Have always before thine Eyes the miserable Corruption of Human Nature: *Be not high-minded, but fear* *:—*Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall* †: And so let the Miscarriages of others excite, not

H 3

thy

* Rom. xi. 20. † 1 Cor. x. 12.

162 *Of being overtaken in a Fault,*

SERM. thy *Triumph*, but thy *Pity* and thy *Caution*;

V. thy *Pity* to *them*, and thy *Caution* to *thyself*. Those who insult over the Slips and Failings, nay over the great and grievous Crimes of their Neighbours, are most likely, by the just Judgment of God, to be at least overtaken, if not more than overtaken themselves. *Solet enim Deus* (says a learned *Expositor* * upon the Place) *simili pœnâ permittere puniri duros & inclementes in peccatores*: For God is wont to permit those to be punish'd in the same manner, who are hard-hearted and unmerciful to Sinners. And here (as I above hinted) by being tempted is to be understood falling, or being overcome by Temptation: Thus the best Interpreters, Lest thou be solicited by the Devil to sin; i. e. lest thou be conquer'd by Temptation; the Antecedent for the Consequent. The Word is to be understood *tum effectu*; i. e. says the learned *Grotius*, *ne tu aliquando tentationi succumbas*; lest thou thyself some time or other sink, and fall under Temptation. Nay the Word is sometimes used actively in this Sense. Thus 1 Cor. vii. 5. *That Satan tempt you not for your*

* POLE's *Synopsis*.

your Incontinency. And more plainly, 1 *Thess.* SERM.
iii. 5. *For this cause, when I could no longer* V.
forbear, I sent to know your Faith, lest through
some means the Tempter have tempted you, and
our Labour be in vain. Where it is evident
that by his having *tempted* them is meant
his having *foil'd* and *worsted* them by Tempt-
ation: Otherwise the Labour which the
Apostles had taken to prevent such a Mis-
chief could not be said *to be in vain.*

HAVING thus dispatch'd the *Four Heads*
of Discourse contain'd in my *Text*, I come
now in the *Fifth* and *Last* Place to make
some *Observations* or *Reflections* upon them.
And *first*,

1. IF it does not become even *spiritual*
Persons to be *severe* upon the Failings and
Miscarriages of others, how much less does
it become those who are *carnal*? And yet
these *last* are far more *apt* to be censorious
than the *former*. Nothing is more common
than for a good Man, who has been *over-*
taken in a Fault, to be condemn'd and ex-
posed by the most profligate of Mankind.
They indeed, as we have seen, are not *fit*
to *restore* others; but upon *that very Account*

104 *Of being overtaken in a Fault,*

SERM. sure they have the *less Reason* to triumph
V. over them.

2. *THOUGH* the Precept here given by the *Apostle* expressly relates only to those who are *overtaken in a Fault*, yet it holds true of *others*, even of those who are guilty of the most enormous Transgressions. Even such are to be *restored* by *spiritual* Persons, and that too *in the Spirit of Meekness*. They are *capable* of repenting; therefore we ought to do the best of our Endeavours to *bring them* to Repentance: And since they are not abandon'd and given over by *God*, they ought not to be so by *Men*. They ought indeed to be treated in a different *Manner* from those whom we have been hitherto considering, because their *Case* is different: It ought indeed to be *in the Spirit of Meekness*; but not in so *soft* and *tender* a Manner, as those ought to be treated in, whose Sins are of *Infirmity*, or who are only *overtaken in a Fault*. And this suggests *another* Observation, which is,

3. *THAT* it is not contrary to the Doctrine of this *Text*, to treat *proud* and *obstinate*

nate Offenders with *Sharpness* and *Severity*. SERM.

And as it is not *forbidden* by *this* Text, so it V.
is *commanded* by *others*. That a Thing be
done *in the Spirit of Meekness*, it is enough
that it be not *inconsistent* with that Spirit:
For it is not possible that every thing we
do should be an actual Exercise of that, or
any other one Virtue. But besides, we may
actually exercise the Virtue of *Meekness*, and
yet be *sharp* and *severe*, nay in some mea-
sure *angry*: For that Virtue is not incom-
patible with every Degree of Anger, but
only with the Excess, or the improper Ap-
plication of it. And though the *Sin* of
Anger be always inconsistent with *Meek-
ness*, yet the *Passion* of Anger is not always
so, but only in some particular Cases and
Circumstances. The *Sin* of it is always a
Passion, but the *Passion* of it is not always
a *Sin*.

4. IF it be our Duty to *reclaim* others
from Sin, how wicked must it be to *draw*
them into it? So wicked it is indeed, that
one could not think it possible there should
be such Monsters in Nature, did not Ex-
perience assure us of the contrary. But as
the *Fact* is *conceivable*, so the *Guilt* is *incon-
ceivable*;

106 *Of being overtaken in a Fault,*

SERM. *ceivable*; and the *Punishment* of it, without

V. *Repentance*, will be *insupportable*.

5. IF Reprehension and Advice ought to be given in the *Spirit of Meekness*, much more ought it to be *received* so. It ought indeed to be *so received*, even when it is *not so given*, and much more when it *is*. He that *offereth* Reproof is sometimes *indiscreet*: But he that *hateth* Reproof is always *brutish*.*

6. WE must remember that there are many Sins of all Kinds, which are known only to God and our own Consciences; and so cannot be the Subject of *friendly Advice*, because our *Friends* can take no Cognizance of them. In those Instances we must be more than ordinarily watchful; and take particular Care to restore *ourselves*, when we cannot be restored by *others*.

To conclude: *Take heed unto yourselves, and to the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers* †, is the Command of God by his great *Apostle* to the *Ministers* of his *Church*; and something like it may be applied to those other *spiritual Persons* I mentioned, *i. e.* to all sincere and well-instructed

* Prov. xii. 1.

† Acts xx. 28.

and of restoring such a one, &c. 107

instructed *Christians*: “Take heed unto your-SERM.

“*selves*, and to your Brethren in *the Flock* V.

“of *Christ*, to whom you are in some mea-
~~~~~

“sure Directors and Guides, to whom you

“are expressly commanded to be Advisers

“and Assistants: Endeavour to *restore* those

“who *are overtaken in Faults*; and that

“you may be the more fit and likely to

“do so, be infinitely careful *not to be over-*

“*taken in them yourselves.*”

Now to God the Father, &c.



SERMON



and of referring each a one, Sec. 107

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SEPMON

# SERMON VI.

## Of Honouring all Men.

I PET. II. 17.

*Honour all Men.*

**H**ONOUR being a *relative* No-SERM.  
tion, and depending upon *Compa-* VI.  
*rison*, it may seem strange that the  
*Apostle* should command us to *honour all*  
*Men*: For according to this (may any one  
say) *Inferiors* ought to be honoured by their  
*Superiors*. I answer, So they ought, in *some*  
*Sense*, and in *some Respects*, though not as  
*Inferiors*. The Word *Honour* in my *Text*  
cannot mean what is *ordinarily* and *most pro-*  
*perly* understood by it, implying somewhat  
of *Preference upon the Whole*: For then we  
should be required to *prefer* all Men before

one

SERM. *one another*; which is absurd in Reason, and

VI. impossible in the Nature of Things, as involving a manifest Contradiction. We are therefore to *honour*, i. e. to *esteem*, or *have a Respect for*, all Men, *more or less*, though not *all alike*; there being no one so mean, but that he has something in him deserving *Esteem* or *Regard*. What is here *hinted at* will be *unfolded* in the Body of my Discourse; which I shall distribute under the following Heads.

I. I SHALL *state* the true *Meaning* of this Precept, or shew *what* and *how much* it implies.

II. CONSIDER the *Reasonableness* and *Importance* of it.

III. MAKE some *Reflections* upon it, as compared with the *different Behaviour* of *different Persons* respectively.

I. AND *First* I am to *state* the true *Meaning* of this Precept, or to shew *what* and *how much* it implies. In order to this we must observe, that Men may be consider'd either *absolutely*, as they are Men; or *relatively*, as compared with one another. In the former

## Of honouring all Men.

III

former View, we are to *honour all Men* upon SERM.  
the Account of the *Dignity of Human Na-* VI.  
*ture in general*: In the *latter*, we are to ho-  
nour *every Person in particular* according to  
that Degree of Respect which is due to  
him.

FIRST then, *Human Nature in general*  
is to be *honour'd*. Man is not only the *Work-*  
*manship*, but (as the Scripture assures us)  
the *Image of God*: Who (as the *Psalmist* \*  
speaks) *has made him but little lower than the*  
*Angels, to crown him with Glory and Wor-*  
*ship*. He is also of so great Value, that the  
*Son of God* paid his most precious Blood to  
redeem him; having first so ennobled our  
*Humanity*, as by a mysterious and ineffable  
Union to join it with his own *Divinity*. We  
must therefore despise none of our own  
Species; but in All revere the *Work* and  
*Image of God the Creator*, and the Purchase,  
and assumed or participated Nature of *God*  
the *Redeemer*. Upon these Accounts we are  
not to *despise*, but even to *honour*, the mean-  
est Servant or Labourer, the most abject  
Beggar, nay the poorest wandring *Lunatick*  
or *Idiot*. For we may easily conceive that  
a *Soul*

\* Psalm viii. 5.



SERM. a Soul may be *immortal*, and yet lodged in  
 VI. such a *Body* as may hinder, disturb, and  
 quite confound its Operations; which yet,  
 when it is freed from that *Body*, may be  
 perfectly regular and exact: The wise Pro-  
 vidence of God permitting this, for Reasons  
 which are to us unknown, and which we  
 have nothing at all to do with. All these  
*Dishonours* of our Nature are owing to *Sin*,  
 original *Sin*: But the Immortality of the  
 Soul, and the Dignity of Human Nature  
 in general, may as well be argued against  
 from a *Calenture*, or a *Fever*, or any other  
*Disease*, as from *Idiocy* or *Madness*: Or,  
 more plainly, it may as well be proved that  
 the Soul is not *immortal*, because the *Body*  
 is *mortal*.

SUCH then is the Honour due to all Men  
 As Men. Our Relations to one another are  
 various; some of narrower, some of wider  
 Extent. We are allied as we are *Country-*  
*men*, as we are *Christians*, as we are *Men*:  
 And this is the widest Relation of all, be-  
 cause it is what *All* agree in. And as we  
 ought chiefly to honour, as well as love the  
*Brotherhood*, which are the next Words to  
 those of my Text; so we ought to love, as  
 well

*Of honouring all Men.*

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well as *honour all Men*, though not in the SERM.  
same Degree. VI.

BUT, it may be said, according to this Doctrine concerning the Excellence of *Human Nature in general*, we are required, among others, to *honour ourselves*. So we are; as *Men*, and as *Christians* too; and in other *more particular* Regards: Meaning, that we must *honour*, even in ourselves, the *Dignity* of our *Nature*, of our *Religion*, of our *Station*, *Profession*, and the like. This is not *Pride*: 'Tis only being conscious of what we truly are, and of what is common to us with others: *Pride* proceeds upon *particular* Comparison between Man and Man: This is too *general* for that. Or if it were not, we have (God knows) little Reason to be *proud*, when we consider, as we ought to do, the *Corruption* of our *Nature*, as well as its *Dignity*. But,

2dly, MEN may be consider'd *relatively*, as *compar'd* with *one another*: And then this Command obliges us to *honour every Person in particular*, according to that *Degree* of Esteem and Regard which is *due* to him. And here it will be found, as we shall shew in its proper Place, that *Inferiors* may be,

SERM. and in some measure ought to be, *honour'd*

VI. by their *Betters*; and much more may  
 ~~~~~ *Equals* be by *one another*. Men of all *Stations*,  
Orders, and *Degrees*, nay of all *Professions*,
Callings, and *Occupations* whatsoever, if they
excel in them, are to be respected accor-
 dingly. Nay they are to be so in some
 measure tho' they do *not* excel: Their *Pro-*
fession, or *Occupation* itself, if it be useful or
 ingenious, or both, ought to be respected
 in them. But of this more in its Place; for
 I shall take Things in their *Order*, and be-
 gin with

THE *Honour* due to *Superiors*: Which is
Honour in the *strictest* and most *proper* Sense.
 And here the Words of our *Apostle* in the
 same Verse with those of my *Text* take
 place first: *Honour the King*. He is not
 only our *Superior*, but the *Supreme*: *Ho-*
nour not only in the most *proper* Sense, but
 in the *highest* Degree, is due to *him* above
 all Men, he being *God's* immediate *Viceregent*
 here on Earth. Next to *him*, in the State,
his own Viceregents are to be *honour'd*: These
 are *Magistrates*, *Governors*, and *Rulers* under
 him. *Submit yourselves*, says the same *Apostle*
St. Peter in this same Chapter, *to every Or-*
dinance

dinance of Man, for the Lord's sake, whether SERM.
it be to the King as supreme; or unto Gover- VI.
nors, as unto them that are sent (i. e. com-
mission'd) by him for the Punishment of evil
Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well.*

But besides Offices and Posts of Honour, Au-
thority, and Jurisdiction, great Regard must
be had to the standing Distinctions, which
the Civil Polity or Custom of any Country
has made between the several Ranks and
Orders of Men. Thus, in our own, the
Gentry ought to be honour'd by the Common-
alty, and the Nobility by both: Ought, I say,
not only in Point of Ceremony, but of strict
Duty, according to this Command of the
Apostle. If I add that among Persons of the
same Rank and Quality, a rich Man is in
some Degree to be honour'd as such, by one
of a much inferior Fortune, I may perhaps
be thought to deserve Censure; *I value him
never the more for his Wealth*, being a Say-
ing in the Mouths of Thousands. It is true,
a worthless Plebeian, without Birth, Educa-
tion, Virtue, or Sense, rais'd from nothing
to great Riches, doing no good with them,
and bearing himself insolently upon them,

SERM. is not only *odious*, but one of the most con-

VI. *temptible* Creatures in Nature, and ought to

be treated accordingly: But sure a Man is not despicable *for being rich*: And those, who upon that Account treat him with seeming *Contempt*, whatever they may pretend, do in Truth not *despise* him, but *envy* him. Nay, he is to be *respected* on that very *Account*: *Riches* are the Gift of *God*, and give one Man a Pre-eminence over another. *Power* is annex'd to them, and *Power* is in Reason and Nature a Foundation of *Preference*. That Persons *ordain'd to any holy Function, spiritual Teachers, Pastors, and Masters, the Ministers, the Embassadors of Jesus Christ* should be greatly reverenc'd, and * *very highly esteem'd* for their *Work's* and *Office's* sake, is plain both from Reason and Scripture; As is the Duty of *Servants* to their *Masters*; and that of *Children* to their *Parents* can be unknown to Nobody, who is acquainted either with the *Law of Nature*, or with the *fifth Commandment, Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, under which *Obedience* too is included. As well known is the Duty of *Wives* to their *Husbands*, which likewise

* 1 Theff. v. 13.

likewise is not only *Honour*, but *Obedience*, SERM. VI.
though of a different Kind from the former.

* *Even as Sarah obey'd Abraham, calling him Lord*, says the *Apostle* of my *Text* in another Place.

THUS then a *subordinate* Minister of State ought to be *respected* by the *biggest*; because he has the *King's Commission* and *Authority*, as well as the other, tho' in a less eminent Post: And the *sacred Function* is to be *reverenced* in a *Priest* or *Deacon*, even by a *Bishop*. But to descend *lower*, and take in a far *greater* Part of Mankind. I need not instance in the *three Faculties*, as they are call'd, *Law*, *Physick*, and *Divinity*, whose Usefulness and Excellence are well known, and confess'd by all who have not renounc'd their Reason. What goes by the Name of the *Commonalty*, as distinguish'd from the *Gentry* and *Nobility*, makes up the main Bulk and Body of the *People*; consisting of innumerable Divisions, according to their several *Occupations*, *Callings*, and *Professions*. And to every one of these a Share of *Honour* is due, even from the highest and most illustrious Members of the Commonwealth,

SERM. because there is *something*, nay a *great deal*,

VI. valuable and excellent in them. Very considerable must be the Skill, Conduct, and Judgment of a cool and well-pois'd Understanding in the due Management of *mercantile* Trades, or those which turn upon *Traffick* and *Commerce*; which are so commodious and beneficial, that at least the Conveniencies and Ornaments of Life cannot be obtain'd, and the World can but very ill subsist without them. How exquisite is the *Ingenuity* of a thousand *mechanical* or *handicraft* Trades! For that Word ought to be extended farther than it *commonly* is, not to be appropriated to the *Learned*, and to Works of *Speculation* only. Fine and elegant Parts, though of a different Turn, may be shewn in a curious Piece of *Mechanism*, which is justly an Object of Admiration and Praise. Nor are these and such-like Things less *useful* than *ingenious*. What would become of the World, were it not for *Traders*, *Manufacturers*, and *Artificers*? For we must take notice under this Head, that the *Great* can no more live without the *Little*, than the *Little* without the *Great*, perhaps not so *well*; nay they certainly cannot. Thus it is

is in the *ordinary* Course and Condition of SERM. Things; but upon *particular* Accidents or VI. Emergencies, how often have the *Highest* owed their *Estates*, and even their *Lives*, to the *Lowest*! The wise Providence of God so disposing the Wants and Exigencies of Men, that what *St. Paul* says of the *Spiritual* Society, the Church, may as well be applied to the *Civil* or *Secular* Community. For the Body is not one Member, but many: If the Foot shall say, Because I am not the Hand, I am not of the Body; is it therefore not of the Body? And if the Ear shall say, Because I am not the Eye, I am not of the Body; is it therefore not of the Body? If the whole Body were an Eye, where were the Hearing? And if the whole were Hearing, where were the Smelling? But now hath God set the Members every one in the Body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one Member, where were the Body? But now are they many Members, yet but one Body. And the Eye cannot say unto the Hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you*. Thus the greatest in the Body Politick cannot say they have

* 1 Cor. xii. 14, 15, &c.

SERM. no need of the *meanest*. But what follows

VI. in the *four next Verses* is more especially applicable to our present Subject: *Nay much more those Members of the Body, which seem to be feeble, are necessary**; or, (as it should rather be render'd) *those Members which seem to be feeble are much more necessary*. By these *Interpreters* understand the *Brain, the Stomach, &c.* which though not *strong, nor beautiful*, as the *Limbs and outward Parts* of the Body are, yet are *much more necessary* to the Preservation of the *Whole*: For the Man cannot at all live without *those*, but he may without *these*. And the same (as I have observed) may be said of the *superior and inferior Members of the Community*; which may subsist, though in an ill State, without the *former*, but not at all without the *latter*. But here I am sensible it may be objected, that according to this Account the *Inferiors* are to be *honour'd* more than the *Superiors*. Not so, for all this; nor near so much neither: For we must ever remember that Distinction between *one particular Respect*, and Things taken *upon the Whole*. The *Apostle* goes on: *And those Members*

* Ver. 22, &c.

Members of the Body which we think to be SERM.
 less honourable, upon these we bestow more VI.
 abundant Honour; and our uncomely Parts
 have more abundant Comeliness. Upon these
 (says St. Paul) which we think to be less ho-
 nourable, we bestow more abundant Honour;
 i. e. we most carefully cloath and hide them,
 for that is the Meaning of the Word in
 this Place: And our uncomely Parts have
 more abundant Comeliness, i. e. the adventi-
 tious Ornaments and Beauty of Cloathing.
 And Ver. 24. For our comely Parts have no
 need [of such Covering and Ornaments] but
 God hath tempered the Body together, having
 given more abundant Honour to that Part
 which lacked. Still the same Sense as be-
 fore. That there should be no Schism [i. e. no
 Division, or Want of Harmony and mutual
 Dependence] in the Body; but that the Mem-
 bers should have the same Care one for another.
 But to proceed.

As there could be no King without Sub-
 jects, so (to speak of Honour now in its first
 and principal Acceptation) how could the
 Great be honour'd, were there no Inferiors
 to honour them? Nay, since these Ideas de-
 pend altogether upon Comparison, how should
 there

SERM. there be any Great, if it were not for Inferi-
 VI. riors? Those therefore should, though not
 ~~~~~ in the same Sense, honour These even for  
 honouring Them, and making them what  
 they are.

IF Inferiors then are to be honoured, much more are Equals. And here that of St. Paul takes place, *In Honour preferring one another* \*. Where Men are quite, or very near upon the Level, they should be so far from insisting upon Precedency, (and much less should they quarrel for it) that their Contention should be for the direct Contrary; each generously striving to set the other above or before him: And so in fact we find it is among all well-natur'd and well-manner'd Persons. Nor is this pure Ceremony or Compliment, but founded upon Reason and Religion, and upon the Precept of my Text, as well as that of St. Paul just now cited.

SOME we must respect, though they are not of our own Profession, Calling, Way of Study and Thinking; and others, though they are. I make this Difference, because too many despise all of the first Division; and

\* Rom. xii. 10.

and either *despise* or *envy*, and upon that SERM.  
 Principle *pretend* to *despise*, all of the *last*. VI.  
 But this Precept obliges us to give their due  
 Praises to *both*; and that too whether they  
 be our *Equals* or *Inferiors*, and much more  
 if they be our *Superiors*.

UNDER this Precept is likewise to be  
 rank'd that *Honour*, which is grounded up-  
 on a common and very true Maxim, *Peri-*  
*tis in sua arte credendum*: "We must sub-  
 mit to the Judgment of the Skilful in  
 "their several Arts and Professions." *Ho-*  
*nour a Physician* (says the wise Son \* of *Si-*  
*racch*) *with the Honour due unto him*: And the  
 Rule holds equally of all others. It is to be ob-  
 served too, not only by *Equals* towards *Equals*  
 in other Regards, but by *Superiors* towards  
*Inferiors*, by the greatest and richest *Poten-*  
*tates*, the most learned *Philosophers* or *Di-*  
*vines*, towards the meanest *Mechanicks*; and  
 then surely by these *last-mentioned* towards  
 their *Betters*. Though here it must be  
 considered, (and a very *material* Considera-  
 tion it is upon this Subject) that the *skilful*  
 in any thing are, *as such*, above those who  
 are *ignorant* in the same thing. How just-  
 ly

\* Ecclus. xxxviii. i.



SERM. ly therefore is *Honour* due to *all Men*, when

VI. there is scarce any one so inconsiderable,  
 but that in *something* he is superior to *others*,  
 who in the *main* are vastly superior to  
*him*!

IN short then, and to draw the whole  
 Matter into a narrower Compass, we are  
 obliged by this Precept to *honour* Human  
 Nature in *general*, and to *praise*, *honour*,  
 or *respect*, all Persons in *particular*, accord-  
 ing to their several *Merits* or *Advantages*;  
 for their Parts, Learning, Strength, Beauty,  
 Birth, Riches, Power, Authority, Skill,  
 Virtue, Goodness, Usefulness to the Publick,  
 for all Talents and Accomplishments, whe-  
 ther of Body or Mind, of Nature, Art, For-  
 tune, or Grace; Persons of both Sexes,  
 whether our Betters, Equals, or Inferiors;  
 of all Conditions, Stations, Callings, Or-  
 ders, and Degrees whatsoever, in Propor-  
 tion to what they severally deserve; neither  
 to be *envious* on the one hand, nor *contem-  
 ptuous* on the other; but to give to every  
 one his due Share of *Regard* and *Esteem*;  
 their *due* at least, if not *more*, and rather  
*more* than *less*. Which brings me to my  
 Second

Second General Head; under which I am SERM.  
to shew, VI.

II. THE Reasonableness and Importance of this Precept. *First* then for its Reasonableness. It is founded upon common Justice, which gives to everyone his *Due*; and among other things, \**Honour to whom Honour* is due. It likewise proceeds upon the great Law of Equity, *Doing as we would be done by*: Every body desires to have some Respect paid him; so much, at least, as he *deserves*: And therefore is unequal in his Dealings, if he denies it to *Others*. Nor are we less obliged to this, nor is it less reasonable in itself, upon the Score of Religion towards God, than of Justice towards our Neighbour. We cannot honour God as we ought, unless we honour all Men. Human Nature in general, and every good Gift † in particular, is from Him. With a View to the *First* let us remember that of ‡ Solomon, *Who so mocketh the Poor reproacheth his Maker*: To the *Second*, that of the wise || Son of Sirach, *Give place (or Honour) to the Physician, for the Lord hath created*

\* Rom. xiii. 7. † James i. 17. ‡ Prov. xvii. 5.  
|| Ecclus. xxxviii. 12.

SERM. *created him, i. e. as a Physician, appointed*

VI. him to his *Office*, and given him his particular *Skill and Talents*. It cannot be understood of creating him *as a Man*; because that may be equally said of *all others*, and so cannot affect *that* Argument upon which the *Divine Moralist* is discoursing. The *Honour* therefore which we pay to *Men* ultimately devolves upon *God*; and if *they* are *dishonour'd* by us, *He* is so too.

2dly, THE *Importance* of this Command is no less considerable than its *Reasonableness*: Great and extensive is the happy Influence it has upon human Society. Were this duly attended to, and put in Practice, mutual Love and Charity, Good-nature, Affability, and Sweetness of Temper, would reign and triumph in the World. Most of the Quarrels, Confusions, and Miseries, which abound in it, proceed from Want of observing this Precept; that is, from *Tyranny* and *Oppression* on the *one* Hand, from *Disrespect* and *Undutifulness* to *Superiors* on the *other*: From Insolence, Cruelty, Pride, Envy, Disputes about Preference, Contempt, Derision, Detraction, and the like. For there would be no such ill Qualities and Practices

Practices as these, did all Men honour all SERM.  
 Men as they ought to do. Which will fully VI.  
 appear from what will be offer'd under my  
*Third* and *Last* General Head, to which I  
 shall now proceed, after having just added  
 here, that the Observance of this Precept is  
 highly beneficial, even in *this* Life, to those  
 who observe it, whether it generally pre-  
 vails or not. He who honours all Men will  
 be honour'd by all Men; and he who honours  
 himself only, will be truly and sincerely ho-  
 nour'd by nobody else.

III. UNDER my *Third* and *Last* General  
 Head I am to make some *Reflections* upon  
 this *Apostolical* Precept, as compared with the  
 different Behaviour of different Persons re-  
 spectively.

AND *First*, If *Human Nature* be to be  
 honour'd by us even in ourselves, how do  
 those Men obey this Command, who by  
 their abominable Vices deface this *Image of*  
*God* in their own Persons, and transform  
 themselves into Brutes, becoming Beasts,  
 either tame or wild, according to the Kinds  
 of their several Vices, whether they be  
 Slaves to Gluttony, Drunkenness, and Lust

on



SERM. on the one Hand, or to immoderate Rage,  
VI. savage Fierceness, and Cruelty on the other.

~~~~~ *Nebuchadnezzar* for his Pride, for his not  
honouring all Men, or rather honouring no
Man but himself, was by his Maker trans-
form'd into a Brute as a Punishment; but
these by their Vices transform themselves,
and so are worse and more irrational Brutes
than he. Nor will it avail to alledge here,
that they may do what they will with *their*
own: So our *Money* is our *own*; but it is the
King's too, in one Sense, viz. as it bears
his *Image and Superscription*: And 'tis
Treason in us to melt it down, and *destroy*
his *Image and Superscription upon it*, not-
withstanding our own Right and Property
in it. Here (tho' in passing) may be men-
tioned the Case of *Self-Murder*: For, not-
withstanding the sophistical Reasonings of
some, *Murder* it is, *strictly and properly* such;
and that, upon one Account, the *worst* Sort
of it. *God* is the only Lord of Life and
Death: And we have the same Kind of
Right to our *Lives* as we have to our *Money*;
that is, to *use* both, but not to *destroy* either.
Nay we are not *so much* Masters and Owners
of ourselves, as we are of our *Money*: That
is

is our *own* Property, but we are *God's*. But SERM.
as this Precept chiefly affects our Regards VI.
and Behaviour towards others, we must
chiefly consider it in that View. And
therefore,

2. It condemns the Practice of *those* who
treat the *Poor*, and all who are necessarily
Dependents upon them, with such *Contempt*
and *Cruelty*, as if they were not of the same
Species with themselves; giving them the
vilest Language, *making* them, or at least
suffering them to starve and perish with the
utmost *Indifference* and *Unconcern*; or it
may be, which is worse, with *Pleasure* and
Delight.

3. THOSE act contrary to this Precept,
who behave with *Insolence*, *Pride*, *Contempt*,
and *Injustice* towards others who are their
Inferiors, though not near *so much* as those
under the foregoing Division, and therefore
ought to be rank'd under a different Class.
How little is the Duty of *honouring all Men*
consider'd by *many* in *Power* and *Authority*,
and by *others* in lower Offices, who abuse,
injure, oppress, tyrannize and insult over
those who are *under* them, and not accep-
table to them, tho' upon all Accounts, ex-

SERM.cept that of *Power*, they are much more

VI. considerable and better Men than *themselves*!

As relieving, aiding, and defending is one Sort of *honouring* Men, (which has been *above* observed) so injuring and oppressing is one Sort of *dishonouring* them: And a very vicious and wicked one too.

WHAT has been said of Persons in publick *Power* and *Authority*, in *Offices*, whether *Civil* or *Ecclesiastical*, may for the same Reasons be apply'd to *superior Family Relations* with regard to the *inferior*: Hither therefore are to be reduced those who are imperious, cruel, and tyrannical to their Children. The same *Apostle* who commands *Children to obey their Parents*, in the next Words commands Parents *not to provoke their Children, lest they be discouraged*.

ANOTHER Set of Persons to be mentioned under this *Third* Particular are they who profess a great Contempt for all *Mechanicks*, as they are pleased to call them, meaning by them (though in very improper Language) all Sorts of, at least inferior, *Traders*. I have shewn under my *First* General Head the great *Ingenuity*, *Usefulness*, and even *Necessity* of such *Callings* and *Occupations*:

Of honouring all Men.

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Occupations: And have likewise shewn un-
der my *Second*, that the particular Talents
for them are the Gift of God as well as all
others. But besides, why is this or that
Tradesman despised by you who *occupy the*
Room of the Learned, or are distinguish'd by
Birth and Fortune? 'Tis true he understands
not *Languages* nor the *Sciences*, but he was
never taught them; and 'tis as true that
you understand not *Traffick*, nor working
in Stone, Wood, Brass, or Iron: He, per-
haps, had he been bred to it, would have
excell'd in your Way; and you perhaps, had
you been bred to it, would not have excell'd
in *his*. Nay many unletter'd Persons dis-
cover a great Genius for *Learning* itself,
and, had they been *educated* accordingly,
would certainly have been *eminent* in it.
Even as it is, many of them have excellent
Understandings in the main, which is more
than can be said of ALL who either make
Literature their *Profession*, or are high and
eminent by their *Birth and Fortune*. As to
these *latter*, they too, *some* of them I mean,
(for in this as in the foregoing Division we
speak of *some* only, and I hope but a *few*,
not of *all*) are pleased to express a most pro-

SERM. found Contempt for the *Mechanicks* afore-

VI. said. And why, I pray? If their *own Greatness* be all they have to boast of, as sometimes it may happen; were we to transfer the Comparison from our own *rational* Species of Animals, to the other the *irrational*, we must acknowledge (if you will allow the *Catachresis* of the Expression) that there is more *Respect* due to a *Bee* or a *Silkworm*, than to a *Tyger*, or a *Lion* himself; I mean for their *delicate Genius* and *Usefulness* to Mankind, tho' by no means for their *Quality* and *Station* in the Rank of Beings.

4thly, How much more do they transgress this Precept, who are *insolent* and *contemptuous* to their *Equals*, and even their *Superiors*! Who *despise* all Professions but their own, and every thing else which they do not *understand*; or else scornfully and proudly reject the Opinions of the Skilful in their several Arts and Faculties, and pretend to understand their Business better than themselves! We ought coolly and respectfully to hear and consider the Judgments of *others*, of our *Equals*, nay *Inferiors*, and much more of our *Betters*, concerning Matters in which we and they are
equal
alike

alike skilled ; such, for Instance, as are to SERM. VI.
be determin'd by common Reason and good Sense ; not (as many do) peremptorily and rudely contradict them, nor be impatient of hearing ourselves contradicted by them. This is a Deference due to *all Men*, as Men, as rational Creatures : Much less sure should we despise their Judgments, when they are *skilful*, and we are *ignorant*. On the contrary, whenever it so happens, let each of the Persons consider himself rather as the *less* than as the *greater*, and be more solicitous to *pay* honour, than to *receive* it. From whence will result that generous Strife which I before mention'd as relating to *Equals*, from those Words of *St. Paul*, **In Honour preferring one another*.

IF this be true, as it is most true, what shall we say of those who behave themselves not only with *Disrespect*, but *insolently* and *contemptuously*, to their *Betters*, nay to their *Rulers* and *Governors* ? How many are there who shew they have no *Honour*, but the direct *contrary*, for the *higher Powers* themselves, † *despising Dominion and speaking Evil of Dignities* : *Evil*, not only by way

K 3

of

* Rom. xii. 10.

† Jude 8.

SERM. of *Railing and Reviling*, but by way of

VI. *Scorn and Contempt*. This is such a *Para-*

dox in Nature, that did we not see it, we could not think it possible. *Insolence* is exceeding *odious* even from the *Noble* to the *Plebeian*; but for *Inferiors* to treat their *Betters* with *Scorn*, is not only more *odious*, but shockingly *monstrous* and *preposterous*. Indeed if those *above* us do by injurious and oppressive Usage give us great and grievous Provocation, we may, and ought to do *Justice* and due *Honour* to ourselves by arguing and expostulating with them; and this holds true with regard to *higher Superiors*, (if I may so speak) I mean those who have *Rule* and *Authority* over us.

BEFORE I go on to the *next Particular*, I shall make some short *Observations* upon those I have already dispatch'd. And the *First* is this, That refusing to pay others their due *Honours* and *Regards*, whether they be *above* us, *below* us, or upon the *Level* with us, proceeds from one and the same Principle, viz. *Pride*. The Man is so full of himself, that he values *Nobody else*, let him be *who* or *what* he will. *Pride*, which makes Men undutiful and disobedient, or
any

any way disrespectful to their *Betters*, makes SERM.
them imperious, domineering, and cruel to VI.
their *Inferiors*. As *Humility*, on the con-
trary, which disposes them chearfully to
obey and reverence the *Former*, disposes
them likewise to be courteous, helpful, and
condescending to the *Latter*. I observe
2dly, That (as it happens in many other
Cases) a Man may really have the *true*
Principle and Frame of Mind here recom-
mended, and yet by reason of his bodily
Temper and Constitution, his imperfect
Education, Business, or Way of Living,
may in his outward Behaviour give Um-
brage to the *contrary*. But then it must be
only in *little* Negligencies and Omissions,
or *sudden* Starts of Passion, and the like :
For though he may be thoughtful, melan-
choly, deficient in Complaisance, &c. and
yet in his Heart sincerely *honour all Men*,
according to the true Sense of this Precept ;
yet he cannot be proud, ill-natur'd, or un-
charitable without transgressing it. Even
those *lesser* Failures just mentioned are *De-*
viations from it ; they are *Faults*, though of
Infirmity, and ought to be corrected as
much as possible. On the other hand, a

S E R M. Man by a happy Temperament of the Blood

VI. and Spirits, by being *good-humour'd* (though not *good-natur'd*) by being *well-bred*, and *pleasant* in *Conversation*, may seem to put in Practice this Precept of the *Apostle*, nay may really do so in some little Degree, yet all this while have nothing of its *internal genuine* Principle, and through the main Course of his Life act in direct Opposition to it. Lastly, here, as in most other Things, is an *Extreme* on either Side; and we may be *excessive*, as well as *defective*. Thus some, out of a mistaken Notion of *Humility*, *honour* their Inferiors *too much*, and lessen their *own Dignity* by so doing.

5thly, IT may be gather'd from what I have said, and is too plain to be insisted upon, that *Derision* and *Detraction* are utterly inconsistent with the Observance of this Precept. To *mock*, *ridicule*, or *expose* the *Defects* or *Infirmities* of the Weak or Unfortunate, is manifestly contrary to *covering* and *concealing* them: And to *lessen* or *detract* from the Reputation of the Eminent and Praise-worthy, is as manifestly irreconcilable with giving them all that
Praise

Praise and *Honour* which they justly de- SERM.
serve. VI.

THESE are the *Qualities, Practices*, and various Turns of *Behaviour*, which are *contrary* to the Precept of my *Text*. How *contemptible* some of them, and how *odious* all of them are, has, I hope, sufficiently appear'd. But,

6thly and lastly, How *amiable*, how *endearing*, how *acceptable* to God and Man, is the Practice of those who act *agreeably* to it! How *lovely* and *venerable*, in particular, (for we need not so much as mention the rest) is what we most properly call by the Name of *Condescension*! Meaning by it the *generous Courtesy* of the *Great* and *Noble*, and other *Superiors*, treating those beneath them, not only with *Civility* and *Kindness*, but with some Degree of *Respect*. And always the more *truly* Great and Noble, the more *condescending*. For *Haughtiness* and *Insolence* are infallible Proofs of a *little* Soul, but (however *paradoxically* it may sound) nothing is more *honourable* than *giving Honour*, nothing more *sublime* and *magnanimous* than *Humility*. *Upstarts* are generally
proud

SERM. *proud and contemptuous, as brave Men are*

VI. *always merciful, and Cowards always cruel.*

FROM what has been offer'd it is obvious to remark how much is included in this short *Text* ; which, tho' short, is so far from being *barren*, that it is *fruitful* of many illustrious Christian Virtues, indeed *all social* Virtues whatsoever, and if duly practis'd would destroy a Multitude of Anti-christian, Inhuman, and Diabolical Vices. The *Former* are *Humility, Justice, Charity, the Duties to Superiors, Equals, and Inferiors; Candour and Courtesy*; whatsoever is comprehended in that excellent and elegant Saying of an * ancient Writer, *Omnes perferre & pati, eorum obsequi studiis* : Or in other Words, whatever is comprehended in *good Nature and good Manners* ; that is, in short, every thing that is *good* relating to *Society*. The *Latter* are *Tyranny in Governors, and Disobedience in Subjects, Pride, Injustice, Uncharitableness, Cruelty, Morosity or Churlishness, Envy, Derision, Detraction, and to sum up all, (for we can scarce name any thing worse) Ill-nature and Malevolence to Mankind.*

Now

* TERENCE.

Of honouring all Men.

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NOW to HIM who *honour'd* our *Huma-* SERM.
nity, so far as to *join* it with his own VI.
Divinity; who so far *honours* the
meanest of our *Species*, as to *condescend*
to call them his *Brethren*; and by his
holy Apostle has commanded *all Men* to
honour one another: To *Him* with the
Father and the *Holy Ghost*, be ascribed,
as is most due, by *Men* and *Angels*,
ALL *Honour* and *Glory*, *Adoration* and
Praise, *Might*, *Majesty*, and *Dom-*
nion, henceforth and for evermore.
Amen.



SERMON

SERMON VII.

The Real and Comparative Value of Reputation.

The *First* Sermon on this Subject.

PHIL. IV. 8.

*---Whatsoever Things are of good
Report---If there be any Praise---*

The Context runs thus:

*Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true,
whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever
things are just, whatsoever things are pure,
whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever
things are of good Report; if there be
any Virtue, and if there be any Praise,
think on these things.*

REPUTATION having no small SERM.
Influence upon the *Manners* and VII.
Behaviour of Men, it must needs
be a Subject of considerable *Importance*. I
propose

SERM. propose therefore to discourse only upon
 VII. *that Part of the Verse which I first read;*
 and have recited the *Whole*, with no other
 View than to make the Sentence complete.
 And because there are *Errors* upon this Sub-
 ject in both Extremes, I shall discuss it as
 clearly and distinctly as I can. In order to
 which I shall,

I. CONSIDER the *Nature of Reputation.*

II. SHEW, that *absolutely* speaking it is a
Good, and to be valued by us as such.

III. SHEW, *relatively* speaking, *when*,
 and *how far*, it is, or is not, to be va-
 lued, in *Comparison* with other Things.

IV. TAKE notice how we are to *behave*
 ourselves with regard to it, in some
 Instances which do not fall under any
 of the foregoing Heads.

I. For the *First* of these: *Reputation*
 may be considered either as relating to the
Opinion which *Others* have of us, or to our
own Thoughts and Reflections upon that *Opinion*.
 With respect to the *former*, it is the
 good or great Esteem, or both, which Men
 have for us. With respect to the *latter*, it
 is

is the Regard we pay to that Esteem. Not SERM.
but that even in the *first* Respect it relates VII.
to *ourselves*, as well as to *others*. *Honor est* ~~~~~

in honorante, is a common Saying: *Honour*
is in the Person honouring; and so it is, but
sure it has a Reference to the Person *ho-*
noured too. However *extrinsecal* it may be
to the *last-mentioned*, it is look'd upon both
by himself, and all that know him, as one
of his *Possessions*; as much so, as his *Mo-*
ney, or his *Lands*; which, by the way, are
no less *extrinsecal* to him than *this*. Indeed
all our *Possessions*, properly speaking, (for
our *inherent Qualities* do not go by that
Name) are Things *without us*, and *separate*
from us. Such a one therefore, as we are
now considering, *possesses* something which
is in the Breasts and Minds of *Others*: A
Regard to which (in the *next Place*) has
sometimes the Name of the *Thing* itself.
Thus, when a Man says he cannot *in Ho-*
nour do this, or is obliged *in Honour* to do
that, he means the *Regard* which he has,
and thinks he ought to have, to his *Honour*
or *Reputation*. But because the *other Sense*
of the Word chiefly obtains, I shall take
no farther Notice of *this*, than to observe,
that

SERM. that as *Infamy* is opposed to *Reputation* taken

VII. in its most usual Meaning; so that Sentiment, or Passion, which we call *Shame*, is opposed to the *Complacency* which arises in us from the real or supposed Possession of *Reputation*: *Shame* being most properly a Grief occasioned by *Infamy*, or by the ill Opinion which the World has, or is conceived to have, of us. I say, most properly: For it may relate to the Judgment of *Ourselves*, as well as of *Others*; or at least of *God* and the holy *Angels*, as well as of *Men*. We are often ashamed, or sometimes very like it, when we have no Witnesses but *God* and his *Angels*, and our own *Consciences*: To *their* Testimony, no doubt, that *Shame* refers; or else it is improperly so called. But I am well assured the former is the Case: We are frequently ashamed of our most secret Actions, nay of our very Thoughts: Even abstracting from *God* and the *Angels*, our own *Consciences* are considered by us as if they were Witnesses and Judges distinct from *Ourselves*. Such is the natural inherent *Turpitude* of some Vices and Follies especially. It may be said perhaps that all this tacitly refers to the Opinions of

of other Men, supposing a *Fear* (though SERM.
not attended to) that the Thing which VII.
causes the Uneasiness should some way or
other come to their *Knowledge*: Or if that
be impossible, it proceeds from the Union
of *Ideas*; we know the Thing *deserves*
Shame; and so are *asham'd* of it. These
Circumstances, I confess, may, and I ques-
tion not, do *concur*; but that which I men-
tioned is not to be *excluded*. For the same
Reason we have, on the contrary, the Sen-
timent of that Pleasure which arises from
Applause, even when no Mortal but our-
selves is conscious to the Action by which
it is occasion'd. But now, to confine my-
self to the most known and usual Sense of
the Word *Reputation*; viz. as it means the
Judgment pass'd upon us by *other Men*:
There is a *good Name* and a *great Name*:
The *First* results from *moral Honesty* and
Virtue; the *Last* from *natural Accomplish-
ments*, noble *Atchievements*, or *illustrious Ac-
tions*, as in *Learning*, *War*, and *Civil Life*:
The *one* is strictly *Reputation*; the *other* is
Fame, *Glory*, or *Renown*. How these two
differ in *Worth* and *Excellence* shall be con-
sider'd

SERM. sider'd in its proper Place, which brings me
 VII. to the 2d Thing I propos'd, viz. To shew,

II. THAT *Reputation*, absolutely speaking, is a *Good*, and ought to be valued by us as such. Because many Men set too high a Price upon it; therefore some run into the other Extreme, and represent it as good for nothing: The *Thing it self* as good for nothing, and a *Regard to it* as hurtful and pernicious, foolish and sinful. The *Thing it self*, say they, is airy and fantastical, existing in Imagination, and no where else: *Another Man's Opinion of me*, whether good or bad, is in *him*, not in *me*, and can no way affect me, unless it be by my own Folly. Then 'tis unlawful and inconsistent with *Christianity*, to have any Esteem for popular Applause, or for any Praise, but that of God: To *him* alone we must approve our Actions, and be utterly unconcern'd whether the *World* approves of them or no. But it is very easy to evince, that all this is both erroneous and dangerous. A Propension to be well esteem'd of is founded in our *Nature*, and consequently in *Reason*: It is implanted in our very Constitution by
 God

God himself, and he who has shaken off SERM.
this Principle has shaken off *Humanity*, and VII.
is degenerated into a *Brute*. It discovers it-
self early in Children; *Reason* and *Shame*
appear in them together: And in grown
Persons the more *innocent* and *ingenious* any
Temper is, the more sensibly it is touched
with *Esteem* or *Disgrace*. A Principle it is,
which belongs to us as *sociable* Creatures:
Shame is the quickest Sentiment we have;
it is manifestly appointed by God and Na-
ture, as the *Guardian* of *Innocence* and the
Avenger of *Guilt*. The greatest and best
Men among the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans*
were made so by their passionate Love of
Glory. That was the *Immortality* to which
they aspired, and which by so *aspiring* they
have actually *gained*. How far that Motive
(which is somewhat distinct from what we
are now directly considering) was *justifiable*
I do not *at present* enquire; but as to *our-*
selves, it is certain that *Reputation* is not so
airy and unsubstantial a Thing as some ima-
gine. It cannot indeed be felt nor seen,
but it may be a real Being for all that, and
the *Effects* of it, and of its contrary too, are
both seen and felt. It may exist in the

SERM. Minds of Others, and yet very nearly

VII. and sensibly affect us: Nay, we actually

find that it *does*, and there is no arguing against Experience. Nothing is more common than for a Man's good or ill Name to be the Making or Ruin of his worldly Fortune; Besides, and abstracting from that, a good Name is *itself* a Part of worldly Happiness: *Pleasure, Profit, and Reputation*, were ever deem'd the three *Ingredients* of it. Whoever disputes against this, disputes against the common Notions of Mankind, even against his own: And to say that we ought to have no View to *temporal* Happiness, when it is not inconsistent with *eternal*, is the Height of Absurdity. To set some *Value* upon *Reputation* in particular, is so far from being unlawful, that the Scripture encourages us to do so. **Avoiding this*, (says the Apostle) *lest any Man should blame us; — Providing for honest Things, not only in the Sight of God, but also in the Sight of Men.* The same Apostle in my Text exhorts us to Virtue on the same Principle. *Whatsoever Things are of good Report: — If there be any Praise think of these*

2 Cor. viii. 20, 21.

these Things : To which we may add the SERM.
 Suffrage of the wise * King Solomon; *A good* VIII.
Name is rather to be chosen than great Riches,
and loving Favour rather than Silver and
Gold. Very often, as I said, it procures
 great Riches; but whether it does, or not,
 it is *itself* better than those Riches, a more
 valuable Treasure than Silver and Gold. In
 that Sex whose distinguishing Glory is *Mo-*
desty, Honour is but another Word for *Vir-*
tue. In all Persons *Impudence* or *Shameless-*
ness was ever accounted highly *Immoral,*
 and to have no Regard to *Reputation* a sure
 Mark of the most profligate Wickedness.
 Farther, if *Reputation* be not a *Good,* *Infam-*
my is not an *Evil :* And if so, how hap-
 pen'd it that the *Ignominy* of our *blessed Sa-*
viour's Passion was so bitter a Portion of
 his *Cup?* Where was the Merit in that
 Part of his Sufferings, *despising the Shame,* †
 if *Shame* be not an *Evil?* And the same
 may be said of his Apostles, who ‡ *rejoiced*
that they were counted worthy to endure it
for his sake. The Sin of *Slander* and *De-*
traction would not be so great as it is, nor
 so severely punish'd by the Laws of God

K. 3 and

* Prov. xxii. 1.

† Heb. xii. 2.

‡ Acts v. 41.

SERM. and Man, if a good Name were of no Value. VII. *Reputation* was ever, and every where,

in all *Ages*, in all *Nations*, esteem'd one of the *Rewards* of *Virtue*, and *Infamy* one of the *Punishments* of *Vice*. Particularly as to the *last*; some *shameful* Punishments, not extending to *Death*, are to many Men more terrible than *Death* itself: And those which do extend so far, are the more terrible, by how much the *Manner* of *Dying* is the more *ignominious*. To go farther yet, the Punishment of the Damn'd themselves in another World will be in a great Measure of the same Kind. * *Many that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake; some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt.*

IN *Reason* then *Reputation* ought to be valued, and that in *Fact* it is so by all Mankind, except perhaps some few, who at the same time are to be excepted from *Humanity*. It is indeed by many too much valued, and the greatest Danger is from that *Extreme*, as we shall more fully consider in its proper Place. They act more with a View to the *Esteem* of Men than to the *Laws* of God. Some proceed upon a Notion of

* Dan. xii. 2.

Honour *falsely* so called; which is altogether unjustifiable: And even those, whose Honour is truly such, should not propose it as their *principal* End, which it is to be feared Multitudes do. How many would commit some particular Sins, did they not dread the Shame of the World, more than Disobedience to God's Laws, and the Ruin of their own Souls! This indeed is carrying the Principle too far; but however 'tis better to be deterr'd from Sin by any Principle, than not at all, provided the Principle be not (as this is not) *absolutely wrong*, but only carried too far: For if it be *absolutely wrong*, we are only deterr'd from one Sin by committing another. But more of this (as I hinted) under my next Head. It was however requisite for the sake of Connexion and Perspicuity to say thus much of it under *this*. Let any thing then, which is not in itself vicious, hinder us from Vice: That a *Regard* to the *Esteem* of Others is not so, has I hope been fully shewn by what has been hitherto discoursed. To which, however, may be added *this* Consideration, that it springs from at least an *innocent*, if not a *virtuous* Root, viz. our natural Desire of Happiness join'd

SERM. with a Consciousness of our own Imperfection. It is upon this, I say, that the *Love*
VII. *of Praise* seems to be founded, which I the rather remark, because I find those who have employ'd their Thoughts upon this Subject at a Loss to account for the *Principle* of it. To desire that our Actions should be such as they ought to be, manifestly and immediately flows from our Desire of Happiness, because our Happiness depends upon the Goodness of our Actions. But being conscious that through the Imperfection of our Nature, we often may possibly be mistaken in our Judgments, and through Prejudice are most likely to be so, when we judge of *ourselves*, we must needs be delighted to find that the Judgments of *others* concur with *our own*. And hence arises the Pleasure Men conceive from the Approbation of the World upon their moral Actions, or upon their Performances of a different Nature, when they have any Doubt concerning them. When they are *manifestly* and *self-evidently* good, they are pleased with Praise for the same Reasons that beautiful Persons are pleased to see their Images in a Glass: The Judgments of others, like
Mirrours,

Mirroure, reflect their Excellencies to them, S. R. M.
which must needs cause an agreeable Turn VII.
of their Thoughts within them. Besides 
they naturally consider the *Value* of *Reputation* grounded upon the Reasons above-
mention'd; and so of consequence rejoice
in the *Possession* of it. Upon the whole, be-
ing of a narrow and limited Capacity, we
must *go out of ourselves* for Complacency
and Satisfaction, and take in the Concur-
rence of foreign Aids: And he who is so
full of himself, as to think the contrary, will
find by Experience that (as we sometimes
speak) he is *full of Emptiness* and nothing
else. Nor does all this in the least make
against what will be observed *hereafter*, that
it is sometimes our *Wisdom*, both in Duty
and Interest, and consequently our *Happi-
ness*, to act counter to the prevailing Vogue
and Fashion of those among whom we live.
For besides that we may be happy *finally*,
and in the *Main*, not only *notwithstanding*,
but even *by*, enduring a particular present
Uneasiness; I say besides this, and con-
sidering only our present Satisfaction, as to
this very Thing; in some Cases our Actions
may be so evidently right and just, that the
Opinion

SERM. Opinion of the whole World (could it, as
 VII. *it cannot*, be supposed contrary to ours) can
 be no Ballance against that Evidence. The
 Declaration of the Universe can convince
 no Man in his Senses that *Murder* and *Adul-*
tery, for example, are Things *excellent*, or
 even not *detestable*. Besides, we know, in
 such Cases, that those who pretend to *con-*
demn and *ridicule* us, do in their Consciences
 not only *acquit*, but *honour* and *applaud* us.
 Or if they, among whom we converse, do
 not, (which cannot be conceiv'd) yet all
good and *wise* Men, whose Praise alone is
 honourable, *do*, as our Case is known to
 them, both *inwardly* and *outwardly* esteem
 us: As for those others who do *not*, they
 are for that very Reason neither *Wise* nor
Good, and so their *Praise* is *Infamy*, and
 their *Disapprobation* or *Contempt* a *Glory*.
 That I do not *beg the Question* in this, will
 appear when I come more fully to unfold
 this Matter under my *next* General Head.
 Nay should *all the World* not only in *Appear-*
ance, but in *reality* condemn and despise us,
 (which is yet more impossible) we have still
 the Approbation and Applause of the *Holy*
Angels, and of *God* himself, which is of
 infinitely

infinitely more Value than the united Praises SE R M.
of all the Universe besides. VII.

I HAVE farther to observe upon this Article, That *Modesty* and *Shame* (though sometimes in a *figurative* Sense used *promiscuously*) are in Strictness thus *distinguish'd*: That the one is a *Fear* of future *Disgrace*; the other, *Sorrow* for the *present*: And that, however a *Disregard* to *Reputation* may seem to be an Instance of *Humility*, it is indeed an Instance of *Pride*; unless it happens to proceed from *well-meaning Weakness*, and *Want of Understanding*. 'Tis *Humility* to value *Reputation* in some measure, and *Pride* absolutely to *despise* it: For a Man may be *proud*, either by *seeking* it too *anxiously*, or by *neglecting* it *totally*. The *first* is *Ambition* and *Vain-glory*, the *last* is *Arrogance* and *Self-sufficiency*: Both which are Species of *Pride*. Upon the *Whole* then, though *Reputation* ought not to be the *principal* End of our Actions, yet it *may*, *ought to be*, and by the Constitution of our Nature *necessarily is*, one End of our Actions. And to make it appear that these Things are very consistent, let us suppose a Person commanded by his *Prince* to do this or that, with

SERM. with a *Reward* promis'd upon *Performance*,
 VII. and a *Punishment* threaten'd upon *Neglect*: He
 does it; and his chief Design is to *obtain* the
Reward, and *avoid* the *Punishment*. But if
 in the Course of Action he has some Regard
 to the *Praise* or *Dispraise* of his *Fellow-Subjects*, as well as of his *Prince* himself;
 is there any thing *unlawful* or *improper* in
 this, or *inconsistent* with the *main End* he
 aims at? The Case is the same as to our
 Obedience towards *God*; only with this Dif-
 ference, which makes it stronger for our
 present Purpose: As our ultimate Reward
 and Punishment are *invisible*, *future*, and
 at a *distance*, and our corrupt Nature is (ge-
 nerally speaking at least) more backward
 and reluctant to obey the heavenly, spiri-
 tual Laws of *God*, than the Laws of *Men*;
 we have the more Need of these *collateral*
 and *adventitious*, though in themselves *inferi-
 or*, Motives; all being few and little
 enough, to spur us on to the regular Per-
 formance of our Duty.

HERE it may be no improper *Digression*
 to take a little Notice of the strange Do-
 ctrine which has been advanced concerning
 the *Principle* of acting with a *View* to *Re-
 ward*

ward and Punishment in general. If we will SERM.
believe some Writers, Virtue is so amply VII.
its own Reward, that we ought not to pro-
pose any other: We must have no Respect
even to eternal Happiness and Misery; Self-
Interest must have no Influence upon us:
The Love of God must be the only Princi-
ple, and his Glory the only End of all our
Actions, so as to exclude all Regard to our-
selves. But this is contrary both to Reason
and Scripture. God himself proposes Bless-
ing and Cursing, as the Motives of our Obe-
dience: Else what Meaning is there in all
the Promises and Threatnings both of the
Old and New Testament? Moses had respect
to the *Recompense of Reward**; and our Sa-
viour himself endured the Cross, and despised
the Shame, for the Joy that was set before
him†. We give Proof of our Love to God
by truly loving ourselves; and do all things
to his Glory, by pursuing our own real In-
terest. These Persons themselves, by do-
ing their Duty in consideration that Virtue
is its own Reward, (as no doubt it is in some
measure) do plainly shew that they have a
View to Reward; and so their own Argu-
ment

* Heb. xi. 26.

† Heb. xii. 2.

SERM. ment turns against them. Indeed that they
 VII. should not have such a View, is manifestly
impossible: And therefore all Reasoning
 on the other Side must be fallacious.
 The *Love of Happiness* is *essential* to all ra-
 tional Beings, and can neither be destroy'd,
 nor in any Degree abated. To say, that
 according to this Account our Obedience is
mercenary and *servile*, is vain and idle:
 Those Epithets being properly used in a *bad*
 Sense, they signify such an Obedience as
 is *purely* selfish, *exclusive* of the *Love of God*,
 and of *all* *Regard* to our *Duty*, as *such*.
 This, no doubt, is inconsistent with true
 Religion, and little better than no Obedi-
 ence at all. But sure it does not follow,
 that because a *Regard* to our *own Interest*
 ought not to *exclude* the *Love of God*, there-
 fore the *Love of God* ought to *exclude* all *Re-
 gard* to our *own Interest*. Those *Soldiers*
 are called *mercenary*, who serve *Foreigners*
 in their Wars, *purely* for their Pay, having
 no Affection for their *Persons*, but only for
 their *Money*, neither *knowing* whether their
 Cause be *just*, nor *caring* whether it be *suc-
 cessful*, or no. But none are so call'd, who
 fight in their *own* and their *Country's* Cause,
 though

though they have some *Regard* to their *Pro- SERM,*
fit, in Concurrence with a *Sense* of their *VII.*
Duty. Or, that we may not dispute mere-
ly about *Words*, if our Adversaries will have
it that the Obedience we are speaking of is
mercenary, it is so in a *good Sense*, and we
need say no more about it.

OTHERS there are who argue against a
Regard only to *temporal Advantages*; one
of which is the *direct Subject* of my Dis-
course, from which I am at present a little
digressing. But they are so far from setting
aside a *Regard* to the *Happiness* and *Misery*
of the *next Life*, that they make *all Reli-*
gion consist in it. Both which Notions are
false, though in different *Extremes*. That
we may have *some View* to the *temporal Ad-*
vantages of *Virtue* in general, I have else-
where proved; and that we not only may,
but ought to have some to one of them in
particular, I have shewn in this very Dis-
course. And though it be not only *lawful*,
but our *Duty*, to respect the eternal *Recom-*
pense of Reward, yet to say, "that a Belief
"of future Rewards and Punishments is
"THAT ALONE which renders our best
"Actions *religious*, and when they do not
"flow

SERM. "flow from thence they cease to be religious," is certainly most false and absurd.

~ VII. To believe those Rewards and Punishments, and act with a *View* to them, is indeed one Duty, but sure it is not *all* Duties. Rewards and Punishments, whether of this Life or of the next, do not *make* our Duty, but *suppose* it: A *Regard* to them indeed *incites* us to all Virtue, but does not *constitute* it: 'Tis a *Motive* to it, but not the *Essence* of it. Virtue and Vice are founded in the *eternal Nature* and *Reasons* of Things, in the *Relation* between God and his *Creatures*, not in our *Love* of *Reward*, and *Fear* of *Punishment*: *Virtue* would be Virtue, and *Vice* Vice, though there were no such Thing as *Reward* or *Punishment* in Being. Those Sanctions, 'tis true, considering the Imperfection and Corruption of our Nature, are necessary to *incite* us to the *one*, and *deter* us from the *other*: But would there be no *Virtue*, if our Nature were not *corrupt*? And if it were *not*, would there be any Occasion for *Reward* and *Punishment*? Even as Things now are, it must be strangely wild to confound *Obedience* to the *Law*, with a *Regard* to the *Sanction*, and to make them

them one and the same Thing. Thus for SERM.
the *Falshood* and *Absurdity* of this Notion: VII.
Then for the Aspect it has upon *Religion*,
this makes our Obedience *selfish* and *mercenary* indeed. If a Regard to Rewards and
Punishments be that ALONE which renders
our best Actions religious, what becomes of
the *Love of God*, the Concern for his Glo-
ry, and the Sense of our own Duty, *as*
such? They are all evacuated and annulled,
and there is an End of all Moral and Di-
vine Excellence in the best of our Actions,
and in truth of all Virtue properly so call'd.
Indeed, notwithstanding what has been said
concerning our *Respect to the Recompense of*
Reward, with which what I am going to
say is by no means inconsistent; the *more*
immediate Regard we have to *God*, and the
less we have to *ourselves*, the more *noble* and
exalted is our *Virtue*. Nay, 'tis impossible
a Man should be truly *religious*, unless the
Love of God and Goodness (*abstracted* from
the Consideration of Reward and Punish-
ment) has a great and powerful *Influence*
upon him. Particularly as to the Case of
Repentance; if he be sorry only for *Fear of*
Punishment, he is no true Penitent: He can-

SERMON. not be so, unless he be sensible of his own
 VII. *Disingenuity, Baseness, and Ingratitude to-*
 wards God; of the natural Deformity, Vile-
 ness, and Turpitude of his Sins, and hear-
 tily grieves and mourns for both: In short,
 unless the Sense of God's Love towards
 him inflames him with Love towards God.
 This only is *Contrition*; the other is no more
 than what we call *Attrition*, which is not
 the true penitential Sorrow, in a *religious*
 and *Christian* Sense. But all this is very re-
 conciliable with our having a very great
 Regard to *eternal Rewards*, and some even
 to *temporal Advantages*; among which *Re-*
putation is one of the most considerable.
 And this brings me back from my *Digres-*
sion; which should not have been so long,
 were not the Matter of it of the utmost *Im-*
portance, and had not the immediate Sub-
 ject of my *Text* been still in *View*. To that
 I shall return in my *next Discourse*, the
 Time not allowing me to pursue the Sub-
 ject at present any farther.

SERMON VIII.

The Real and Comparative Value of Reputation.

The Second Sermon on this Subject.

PHIL. IV. 8.

Whatsoever Things are of good Report---If there be any Praise---

I PROCEED now (as I proposed) to SERM. VIII. shew in the Third Place, III. *Relatively speaking, when, and how far Reputation is, and is not, to be valued in Comparison with other Things.* Here it will be requisite to premise, that there is *false* and *counterfeit* Reputation, as well as *true* and *real*; and that with relation both to *Persons* and *Things*, the *Persons esteeming the Things*, and consequently the *Persons esteemed*. From these, either separately or jointly, results a *true* or *false* Reputation.

SERM. A Number of Men, injudicious or wicked,
 VIII. or both, may praise us for that which
 ~~~~~ in itself is not praise-worthy, but the  
 direct contrary. Now, as when we ask  
 the Value of any Coin in Gold or Silver,  
 it is supposed, or taken for granted on all  
 Hands, that it is Gold or Silver, not Brass  
 or Tin, or any spurious adulterated Metal;  
 so when we enquire the Value of *Reputa-*  
*tion*, we mean *real* not *counterfeit*, because  
 the *latter* is of no Value at all. It may  
 happen, that a great Number of Men, es-  
 pecially if some of them be *great Men*,  
 may so fortify one another in their Vices,  
 as either to be past *Shame* and *Reputation*,  
 or to misplace or transfer them; insomuch  
 that the most profligate Wickedness may  
 become *of good Report*, I mean among *them*;  
 tho' it is impossible it should ever be so with  
 the Generality of Mankind. The very Pre-  
 tence to *C chastity*, to *Piety*, to *common Jus-*  
*tice*, and even *Heathen Honour*, to the least  
 Respect not only for *Christianity*, but for  
*Natural Religion*, may be utterly discarded  
 and abandon'd, they may *glory in their*  
*Shame*, triumph in *barefac'd Lewdness*, *Pro-*  
*faueness*, and all Sorts of *Corruption*, *Irre-*  
*ligion*,

ligion, and *Atheism* itself. What it should be that Men of any Figure, Power, or Authority, in any Age or Nation, could ever mean by giving this Turn to things, seems very unaccountable in Point of Policy itself. SERM. VIII.

AND as some are *proud* of their *bad* Actions, so others are *ashamed* of their *good* ones. Something like this in Things of a *secret* Nature, as *private Prayer* for instance, may proceed from no ill Principle. The Action being private, to be broken in upon may cause *Surprize* rather than *Shame*: Or if it be the *latter*, I am sure it is a *Shame* which we ought to be *asham'd* of. But waving this, because it is a *Secret*, how many are there, even among the best of us, who are very modest, reserved, and almost bashful, in talking upon any divine Subject in common Conversation. This certainly is a very vicious Modesty: And as it is caused by the Corruption and Wickedness of the World in general, on the *one* hand, so it is an Argument that those *well-disposed* Persons, who are thus shy upon such Occasions, are not quite *so* well disposed as they *should* be on the *other*. I am as far as any one can

SERM. be from encouraging either hypocritical  
 VIII. Pretences, or Religious Talk, when it is  
 improper and ill-tim'd. But as there is a  
*Form of Godliness* without the Power of it,  
 so there is such a Thing too as true Piety,  
 and sincere prudent Zeal for Religion.  
 However this is undoubted, that to decline  
 such Discourse out of *Bashfulness* is a Breach  
 of our Duty, and a very great Sin. It is  
 disowning the Cause of God and Virtue,  
 and those who are guilty of it should seri-  
 ously reflect upon those Words of our blef-  
 sed Saviour, \* *Whosoever shall be ashamed of*  
*me, and of my Words in this adulterous and*  
*sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of*  
*Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory*  
*of his Father, with his holy Angels.* Nay,  
 as to the Thing itself, I cannot but observe,  
 in passing, that as we may discourse upon  
 Religious Subjects unseasonably, and in a  
 Manner nauseous to all Men of Sense and  
 real Virtue, so may we discourse upon them  
 too very seasonably, and in a manly rational  
 Way, to the Edification of ourselves and  
 others: And, moreover, that a truly pious  
 Christian cannot forbear, at some times, to  
 introduce

\* Mark viii. 38.

introduce or encourage such Discourse in SERM.  
ordinary Conversation, according to that of VIII.  
the *Royal Psalmist*, \**The Mouth of the Righte-*  
*ous is exercised in Wisdom, and his Tongue*  
*will be talking of Judgment.*

WHEN it is said then that we ought to  
value *Reputation*, we always understand that  
which is so among good and wise Men. For  
it is not to be arbitrary, but to be founded in  
the eternal Nature and Reasons of Things.  
When the Scripture recommends to us  
*whatsoever Things are of good Report*, it  
means those which *always ought* to be so,  
not those which, with certain Persons, *some-*  
*times are so*. For there is a sure unalter-  
able Standard of true and false *Honour*, as  
well as other Things: And what should  
that be, but the Judgment of God, as de-  
clared in holy Scripture, to which that of  
Men ought evermore to be conformed? If  
it be ask'd by way of Objection, What then  
does *Reputation* signify, since it is the Judg-  
ment of *Others* concerning us, and we *our-*  
*selves*, it seems, must be *Judges* of that  
Judgment? The Answer (as I hinted under  
my *first Head*) must be in effect the same

M 4 as

\* Psalm xxxvii. 30.



SERM. as in the Case of *private Judgment* in Mat-  
VIII. ters of *Religion* and *Conscience*, compared  
~~~~~ with the Authority of the Church in *general*,  
or of *particular* Teachers and Instructors;
our own in neither Case is suspended or set
aside; and yet that of *others* may very rea-
sonably have a great deal of Weight with
us. We may and ought to judge for our-
selves, even of their Judgment concerning
us: Notwithstanding which theirs may
very much influence and affect us, and
ought in all reason to do so. Now all this
turns upon the *Diversity of Cases*; the *Plain-
ness* of *some*, and the *Difficulty*, at least *not
so great Plainness*, of *others*. The Opinion
of the whole World, as I said in my *last*
Discourse, cannot persuade us that *Murder*
or *Adultery*, for example, are in themselves
laudable: But the Opinion of those about
us concurring with our own, may exceed-
ingly confirm us in a thousand other In-
stances. And even where we are so evi-
dently in the Right as to require and need
no Confirmation, the good Opinion of
others concerning us is extremely delight-
ful, for the Reasons above-alledged: By
which it was proved that *Reputation*, abso-
lutely

lutely speaking, is a Good, and ought to be SERM.
esteemed and valued by us as such. VIII.

WHEN it is *false* and *spurious* therefore it is not to be *valued* at all, but to be *abhorred*: And even when it is *true* and *genuine*, it is not to be valued *immoderately*, but to be looked upon as inconsiderable in Comparison of a good *Conscience*. Thus as to *Reputation*, commonly and *most properly* so call'd, meaning that *Esteem* which arises from *Virtue* and *moral Honesty*. As for *Fame*, *Glory*, and *Renown*, meaning that *Esteem* which arises from *natural Qualifications* and *illustrious Actions*, as in *War*, *Learning*, *Civil Life*, &c. I cannot but think that this likewise is of *some Value* in itself, and that it is *lawful* even for a *Christian* to have *some* Regard to it. The best *Heathen* (as we said) proposed this as the *chief* End of their Actions, the *ultimate* Reward of all their Labours. *Most* of them, at least, did; and if some *few* among them had a Prospect of Retribution in *another World*, yet that Prospect was very *faint* and *obscure*. But this, in the *Remembrance* and *Esteem* of *Others* through successive Generations, was the only *Immortality* which they thoroughly believed,

SERM. lieved, and to which they heartily aspired.

VIII. A *poor* Immortality God knows! But still
 it was the *best* they had any clear Notion of;
 and therefore to *them*, no doubt, it was a
 very lawful Principle of Action. Nay, I see
 no Reason why it may not be so to *us*;
 provided it be *subordinate*, and rated at no-
 thing in Comparison of that real * *Life and*
Immortality which *Jesus Christ* hath brought
 to *Light through the Gospel*. To be thus
 esteemed may be a great Advantage to a
 Man, while he is *in* this World, with re-
 lation to the Things of it: And Pleasure is
 naturally attached to *this*, as well as to all
other Praise, for the Reasons which I have
 above assign'd. Then for its Continuance
 in the Minds and Mouths of Men, after the
Death of the Person thus famed and re-
 nowned; it is indeed (as I hinted) a *poor*
mortal Immortality; but perhaps to have a
 little View even to *this*, may not be so very
absurd, nor so very *unchristian*, as it is by
 some represented. That Men will not be
 at all affected by it in the *other* World, is
 more than we are sure of in *this*: No doubt
 it will be a very *Trifle* to them, if it be *any*
 thing

thing at all. But admitting (which indeed SERM.
I rather believe) that it will be *nothing*, the VIII.
Thought of it, however, is at present an
agreeable Amusement to them, and (for
ought I see) an *innocent* one. This *posthu-*
mous Glory, it is true, must not be over-
rated; and no more must that of which we
are *actually* possessed. But provided we are
moderately desirous of them, I know no-
thing in the Christian Religion that forbids
either. Why should it be *unlawful* to be
pleased with the Prospect of being praised
after one is *dead* (admitting that he will
then be either *ignorant* of it, or *unaffected*
by it, which yet is more than we know)
any more than it is to be pleased with be-
ing *actually* praised when he is *living*? I
mean here Praise in *general* for whatever
truly deserves it, not only that which re-
sults from *personal* Qualifications, and Per-
formances abstracted from *Virtue* and *Mo-*
rality; though that drew me into the pre-
sent Thought concerning *Reputation* after
Death. So far am I from intending That
only, that in Truth *nothing* deserves Praise,
or any other Reward, *strictly speaking*, but
Virtue. Those other Things are rather
Subjects

SERM. Subjects of *Congratulation* than *Applause*.

VIII. Taking in this Caution therefore, the *Glory* or *Fame*, after *Death*, of which I am now speaking, is neither an *absurd*, nor an *impious* Notion. If it were, we should not find in Scripture such Texts (to omit many others) as these: * *The Righteous shall be had in everlasting Remembrance.* † *The Memory of the Just is blessed, but the Name of the Wicked shall rot.* ‡ *The Wise shall inherit Glory, but Shame shall be the Promotion of Fools.* Nor would the *blessed Virgin*, that illustrious Pattern of *Humility* and *Meekness*, have sung that holy *Triumph* to herself: || *Behold from henceforth all Generations shall call me blessed.* An Argument, by the way, that a View to *Reputation*, and even to *Fame* and *temporal Glory*, is not inconsistent with the truest *Humility* and *Lowliness* of Mind. Nay, as to *Qualifications*, *Actions*, and *Performances* of that *other Nature*, abstracted from *Virtue*, strictly so called, it was surely to do some *Honour* to the Persons themselves, as well as to excite the *Imitation* of Posterity, that the Names of

so

* Psalm cxii. 6.

† Prov. x. 7.

‡ Prov. iii. 35.

|| Luke i. 48.

so many Worthies in *War*, in *Arts*, and *Civil Life* are recorded in *Holy Scripture*. SERM. VIII.

The wise Son of *Sirach*, who was a very good Judge of the *Canonical* inspired Writings, though his own are *Apocryphal*, is certainly of that Opinion, when in the Introduction to his List of illustrious Persons, whose Characters he takes from the Old Testament, he says, “ * *Let us now praise famous Men, and our Fathers that begat us. The Lord hath wrought great Glory by them, through his great Power from the beginning. Such as did bear Rule in their Kingdoms, Men renowned for their Power; giving Counsel by their Understanding, and declaring Prophecies. Leaders of the People by their Counsels, and by their Knowledge of Learning meet for the People, wise and eloquent in their Instructions. Such as found out Musical Tunes, and recited Verses in Writing. Rich Men furnished with Ability, living peaceably in their Habitations. All these were honoured in their Generations, and the Glory of their Times. There be of them that have left a Name behind them, that their Praises might be reported.*”

• *Ecclus. xliv. 1, & seq.*

SERM. "reported. And some there be which have

VIII. "no Memorial, who are perish'd, as though

~ "they had never been, and are become as

"though they had never been born, and their

"Children after them. But these were mer-

"ciful Men, whose Righteousness hath not

"been forgotten. With their Seed shall con-

"tinually remain a good Inheritance, and

"their Children are within the Covenant.

"Their Seed stands fast, and their Children

"for their sakes. Their Seed shall remain

"for ever, and their Glory shall not be blot-

"ted out. Their Bodies are buried in Peace,

"but their Name liveth for evermore. The

"People will tell of their Wisdom, and the

"Congregation will shew forth their Praise."

The Truth is, Fame is not completed till

after a Man's Death: Envy obstructs it in

his Life-time, and (as a truly famous Per-

son of our own Nation acutely observes)

Censure is a Tax which a Man pays to the

Publick for being eminent: But this by his

Death either ceases, or is much abated. But

to return. Ambition indeed, (I mean as it

relates to Praise, for it sometimes relates to

Power and Dominion) may be innocent, or

a Vice, an Argument of a great, or of a

little

little Mind, according as it is circumstan-
tiated. It is *innocent*, if it be a *rational*
Love of Human Glory, *proportion'd* to the
real Worth of its Object, duly *regulated*,
and exciting us to *heroic* or *illustrious* Per-
formances. It is a *Vice*, if it be *any* Desire
of *false* Glory, or an *excessive* Desire of *true*,
if it goes beyond its *just* Bounds, or makes
use of *unlawful* Means.

THERE is then a good Name and a great
Name: The *first* of these ought to be more
valued; but the *last*, I doubt, generally is
so. Men are commonly more desirous to
be thought *brave*, *learned*, *ingenious*, &c.
than *virtuous* and *good*, and are apt to be
ashamed of their *natural* Faults, more than
of their *moral*. Whereas, in reality, the
former are, properly speaking, not at all
disgraceful: They are justly Matter of *Hu-*
miliation indeed, but not of *Shame*. And
yet Men seem to be of Opinion that the
Case is quite otherwise. How many are
there who had rather be thought *debauch'd*,
than in the least *deform'd*, nay *Knaves* than
Fools; and will be less offended at a Man
for reflecting upon their *Morals*, than upon
their *Accomplishments*, either of Body or
Mind.

SERM. Mind. Some *particular* Vices indeed are
 VIII. so very infamous in the universal Judgment,
 even of wicked Men, that they are more
 ashamed of *them*, than of natural Imper-
 fections; but upon the Whole, and taking
 one thing with another, it is as I said: And
 there cannot be a stronger Proof of the De-
 generacy and Corruption of the World.
 Sometimes too it happens that a *great* and
 a *good* Name go *together*; and that with re-
 ference not only to the same *Persons*, but
 to the same *Qualities* or *Actions*: As in all
 Works of *Heroic Virtue*, especially such as
 are of a *publick Nature*, and of *lasting Be-*
nefit to Mankind.

IN short, *true Reputation*, like other
 worldly Advantages, is a real *Good* to us,
 if it be *moderately desir'd* and *rightly used*.
 A Man may seek and get *Money*, nay in
 some measure *love* it too, and no harm
 done, provided he be not *covetous* of it,
 and do not apply it to ill Purposes.
 And whereas I took Notice under my *first*
 Head, that Men are pleased with *Praise*,
 for the same reason that beautiful Persons
 are pleased with seeing their Images in a
 Glass, I now observe for the *farther Il-*
lustration

Illustration of the Point before us, that it is SERM.
not absolutely *criminal* in such Persons to VIII.
be so pleased: That Gift of Nature is really
an Advantage in itself; and there is no
Crime in their seeing it, and being delight-
ed with it, provided they do not make too
much and too *frequent* Use of the Mirrour,
be not *over-fond* of themselves, nor *proud* or
vain-glorious of their Accomplishment. The
Case is the same in this Instance of *Reputa-*
tion, as in those of *Wealth* and *Beauty*: Our
Desire and *Use* of all *three* are to be regu-
lated by the same Maxims of Reason and
Religion.

A good Name then is valuable; but a good
Conscience is more so: For the Acquisition
of *That* we must not sacrifice *This*; and
even when *both* are consistent we must be
far more delighted with the *latter* than with
the *former*. Indeed (as it may be collected
from what has been discoursed) we *cannot*
exchange a good Conscience for *true* Repu-
tation, though we may for *false*: But I say,
even when it is *true* Reputation, it is no-
thing in Comparison of a good Conscience:
This last is *absolutely necessary*, the *other* is
not.

SERM. SOMETIMES, however, we ought to act
 VIII. contrary to the common Vogue, notwithstanding the Censure of those among whom we live; and be *infamous*, as 'tis then called, though improperly and falsely. For as there is a certain Standard of true and false *Honour*, (which has been shewn) so there must be one, for the same Reason, of true and false *Shame*. In such Cases we must bear the Ignominy, always making it our chief Aim to approve ourselves to our great Master, and to be in the Number of those, * *whose Praise is not of Men, but of God*; i. e. when we cannot have Praise of *both*, as sometimes indeed we *may*, but very often we *may not*. Great is the Bravery and Virtue of doing our Duty in spite of such Disgrace.

AND here a *Question* may arise, Whether a Man who bears *Shame* (as 'tis called) in doing his Duty, be *truly* and *properly* ashamed? In the Pains of the Body, in all sensible Infirmities, he is certainly a Sufferer, be his Cause never so good; but as to the Case now before us, may it not be said, that if Ignominy or Disgrace be thrown upon him for doing his Duty, it is *really* no Ignominy

or Disgrace at all, but the *contrary*, as I SERM. have stated it in this very Discourse; that VIII. he cannot but know, and consider it to be so; and consequently how can he be uneasy from any Sense of *Shame*? It is true, I have stated that Part so as the Question supposes; and I have likewise observed that *Ignominy* added no small Weight to the Sufferings of the *Apostles*, and of our *blessed Saviour* himself. How then are these Things to be *reconciled*, and particularly how is the present Question to be *answered*? Why *thus*: The most innocent, nay the most heroically virtuous Person may be a *Sufferer* from what the World calls *Disgrace*, though it be not truly such, and may be really affected with a Sense of *Shame*, notwithstanding he at the same time *rejoices* and *glories* in it. But how *at the same time*? In *That* all the *Difficulty* consists; and in clearing *That* the Question will be fully answered. Not in the *same Moment* or *Instant*; but at the same time, *vulgarly* and *loosely* speaking. Human Nature shrinks, and recoils, and suffers, at the *immediate Infliction* (as we may speak) of what is *ordinarily deemed* *Ignominy*, or *Reproach*, whe-

SERM. ther it be *truly such* or *not*; and that, for
 VIII. the Reasons above alledged, proving *Reputation* to be absolutely a *Good*, and *Infamy* to be absolutely an *Evil*. Thus far the *Sentiment of Shame* is like a *bodily Pain*, and continues so, till the Mind has time to turn upon itself, and consider *two Things*:
 1. That this is not *real* Disgrace: And
 2. If it *were*, this Pain would be more than balanced by the *Reward* which follows for patiently enduring it. Thus the Soul is *alternately* affected with *Pain* and *Pleasure*: *Suffers*, and then again *rejoices* upon the very Consideration of that *Suffering*. The whole Matter therefore is solved by the *various Turns* and *Shiftings* of our *Thoughts* within us: A due Reflection upon which would clear many *other* Difficulties, not very easily, if at all, to be cleared without it.

THE different Regard to be had to *good* and *bad* Judges, in point of *Reputation*, has been already touch'd upon, so far as it affects *Morality*. As to *other Things*, it is commonly thought that nobody can value the Applause of the *Injudicious*, but those who are *injudicious themselves*, or very *vain*,
 or

or *both*. But I am not sure that this is SERM.
strictly true. The Praise even of such a VIII.
one reminds the Person praised of his own
Excellencies (if they are really such, other-
wise he is *vain* indeed) and though he
founds not his Opinion of them upon the
Judgment of that Other, yet it causes in
him (and that *rationally* too) an agreeable
Movement of Thought, for the Reasons
above assigned, concerning the *Pleasure*
arising from *Praise*, as it gives the Person
occasion to reflect upon his own *Advantages*.

AND this suggests to us *another* Enquiry
not *foreign* to our Subject, *How far* the
Judgment of the *Many*, the *Gross of Man-*
kind, is to be *valued* by us. A certain
noble Writer in our Language lays it down
as a general Rule, *The Multitude is always*
in the wrong. But sure this is so far from
being true, that in some Things the *Multi-*
tude is always in the *right*. There are,
indeed, *vulgar Errors* on the *one* hand; but
then there are *general Maxims* which all the
World agrees in, on the *other*; and those
are undoubtedly Truths. The *Medium*
therefore between these *Extremes* must be
determined by the *Nature* of the Things con-
cerning

SERM. cerning which the Judgment is to be made,
 VIII. the *Generality* of Mankind being ill Judges
 of *some*, but not of *others*: This is certain,
 we must not * *follow a Multitude to do Evil*;
 and I think no more need be added upon
 this Article.

BESIDES a Man's own *immediate* Reputation grounded upon his *personal Qualities* and *Behaviour*, there is *another* Thing to be just taken Notice of upon this Subject, and that is *Family-Reputation*. Such, or such a one, it is usually said, is an *Honour* or a *Scandal to his Family*: And a great deal of Stress seems to be laid upon it; more perhaps than it will reasonably bear. There is indeed *something* in this, but, I think, not *much*. I mean as it *ought* to be, or according to the *real Nature* of Things, abstracted from the *erroneous Notions* of Mankind. It seems to turn upon *Disgrace* more than *Credit*, and to *differ* according to the *different Relation* which is between the Persons concerned. Vicious *Parents* may cast a Slur upon their *Children*; because the *latter* may be suspected of tainted Blood, and of inheriting the ill *Qualities* of those from whom

* Exod. xxiii. 2.

whom they are descended. And on the SERM.
Reverse, vicious *Children* may occasion a Re- VIII.
 flection upon their *Parents*, not only for the
 same Reason, but moreover because they
 were *ill educated*. And though there may
 be some reasonable Surmise for this, yet it
 must not be carried *far*: Because, after all,
 it *may not* be so; and in this, as in every
 thing else, we ought to make the most *cha-*
ritable Construction. But as the Case af-
 fects *collateral* Kindred, it is much altered.
 A Man may thus far, though with a very
 different Temper, apply the Words of
 wicked Cain, * *Am I my Brother's Keeper?*
 'Tis true, I ought to *admonish* and *advise*
 him; but I had not the *Care* of his *Educa-*
tion, (though if I had, perhaps I could not
 have *prevented* his Miscarriages) I heartily
mourn and *grieve* for his Faults, but the In-
 famy of them is *his own*, not *mine*. How-
 ever, even in this *Disgrace*, as 'tis called,
 there may be *something*, though very *little*:
 But it is as needless, as 'tis impossible, to
 weigh these Things by *Grains* and *Scruples*.
 And so I pass on to take Notice in the
Fourth and *Last* Place,

N 4

IV. How

* Gen. iv. 9.

SERM. IV. How we are to behave with re-
 VIII. gard to *Reputation*, in some Instances which
 do not fall under any of the *foregoing* Heads.
 This may respect either *ourselves* or *others*;
 and I shall set down my Thoughts in a
 very few Words, without any formal Dis-
 tribution of Matter into distinct Particulars.
 The Way to get and keep true *Reputation* is
 manifestly *this*, to do our *Duty*, and not
 appear *ambitious*: Which latter I mention,
 because *Praise* or *Honour*, whether *genuine*
 or *spurious*, is the *only* thing which is cer-
 tainly *miss'd of*, by appearing to be *anxiously*
sought. Whoever shews that he *passionately*
desires it will for that *very* Reason be sure
 never to *have* it. Which cannot be said of
 any thing else. Are we in Possession of the
 World's *Esteem*? Let us be *cheerful*, and
 make a *good Use* of it. Do we *deserve* it,
 and yet have it *not*? Let us use the *proper*
Means to obtain it, and in the mean while
 be patient *without* it. However its *Counter-*
feit let us always despise: For

* *Falsus honor juvat, & mendax infamia terret*
Quem, nisi mendosum? —

“ None

* HORACE.

“None but a vicious Man, is either pleased SERM.
 “with false Honour, or frighted with ly- VIII.
 “ing Calumny.” Do we see a Man *de-*
serving Reputation and having *none*? Let
 us endeavour to help him to it: At the
 same time congratulating those who both
 merit and possess it, and adding our own
 Esteem to that of others. Those who *had*
 a good Name, but have justly *lost* it, must
 be treated with prudent Tenderneſs. Hav-
 ing been *once* thoroughly aſham’d makes
 ſome People aſham’d *no more*: It has indeed
 different Effects upon different Perſons, ac-
 cording to their natural Tempers, and other
 Circumſtances. It ſhall break the Heart of
one Man, and make *another* impudent and
 deſperately wicked. To avoid both which,
 the Perſons themſelves who have thus for-
 feited their good Character muſt bear the
 Shame with Chriſtian Patience, look upon
 it as a juſt Punishment for their Sins, make
 it Matter of their Humiliation, and a Means
 of their Repentance; but not deſpond, nor
 be over-whelmed with too much Sorrow.
 And it is the Duty of *others* to deal tenderly
 with them, to comfort and encourage them,
 provided, I mean, they appear penitent,
 humbled,

SERM. humbled, and inclin'd to reform. Other-
VIII. wise the Rule is to have nothing to do with
 them, much less to flatter and caress them;
 be they never so great, and our own Tem-
 poral Interest never so much concern'd.
 For not only by *courting*, but even by *con-*
versing with such as have lost *their* Reputa-
 tion, we are justly in danger of losing *our*
own.

NOW to God the Father, &c.



SERMON

187
S E R M O N IX.

The Comforts and Supports of a good Conscience, and the Torments of a guilty one.

PROV. XVIII. 14.

The Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmary; but a wounded Spirit who can bear?

EXPOSITORS interpret the Words S E R M. to this Effect. "A manly, courageous Soul, or Spirit, (for so they understand *וְרוּחַ אִישׁ*, the *Spirit of a Man*, i. e. a manly Spirit) will enable him who has it to bear up under the Troubles, Calamities, and Afflictions arising from his *Body* or *Fortune*: But if the *Mind*, *Soul*, or *Spirit* itself

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SERM. self be broken, dejected, and pusillanimous,

IX. *who can endure it?* or (as indeed the Word may very well be render'd) *who can raise it, or lift it up?* If that which should support, does itself want to be supported, who can, &c.? Agreeable to the Turn and Cast of those Expressions in the *New Testament*,
 * *If the Light that is in thee be Darknes, how great is that Darknes?* And † *if the Salt have lost its Savour, wherewith shall it be salted?*" But they seem to neglect the most natural, most important, and best Construction of all. By *Spirit* I understand *Conscience*, and take it *thus*. "If a Man has a good *Conscience*, that will enable him to support all temporal Afflictions; but an evil or guilty *Conscience* is itself the greatest of all Torments, and *who can bear it?* Or (according to the *other* Interpretation) *who can lift it up, or give it Comfort?*" Their Exposition makes the Whole relate not to *Religion*, but *Philosophy*; and that too not *Moral* Philosophy, but *Natural*: Whereas, according to *ours*, it is a most useful and momentous Aphorism of *Morality* and *Divinity*. The Words *Soul, Mind, Heart, and Spirit,*

* Matth. vi. 23.

† Matth. v. 13.

and the Torments of a guilty one. 189

Spirit, are in the *Old Testament* used in a *SERM.* great Variety of Significations, occasioned *IX.* by the Narrowness and Simplicity of the Language in which it is written: And so they are in the *New* likewise, by reason of its frequent *Hebraisms*, upon the account of its Reference to the *Old*. And the same may be said of those Words in *other Languages*, both *ancient* and *modern*, our *own* among the rest. That *Heart* and *Spirit* are, both in the *Old* and *New Testament*, often joined together, and used as Terms *synonymous*, or signifying the same Thing, must be known to all who read them with any Attention: And it is no less plain that *Heart* is frequently used for *Conscience*. Thus *David's HEART* * *smote him*, after he had cut off *Saul's Skirt*; i. e. his *Conscience* accused him. *Thine own HEART knoweth that thou hast cursed others* †. *If our HEART condemn us — If our HEART condemn us not* ‡. — I might produce several Instances in which the Word *Spirit* itself may bear that Interpretation: But because I confess it may bear another, I do not insist upon them.

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 5.
iii. 20, 21.

† Eccles. vii. 22.

‡ 1 John

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SERM. them. Nor is it at all material : It is enough

IX for my Purpose, that, according to the

~ Analogy of Language, it *may* so signify in this Place, though there were no more Examples of it. However, I shall produce *one* express Text to this Purpose; in which the Word *Spirit* itself is used by St. Paul for Conscience. *For no Man knoweth the Things of a Man, save the SPIRIT of a Man which is in him* * ; i. e. every Man's particular Conscience. Thus therefore a good Conscience will support a Man under all the Troubles and Afflictions of this World; but an *evil* or *guilty* Conscience is itself insupportable. If it be said, I have added the Word *good*, which is not in the *Text*, and consequently the Exposition is forced and unnatural; I answer, Those who make this Objection must be ill acquainted with the *elliptical* Stile both of the *Old* and *New* Testament, and of the best both *Greek* and *Latin* Writers; of which innumerable Instances might be given, seemingly far more unnatural and exceptionable than this. Or suppose nothing were supplied, no Word added: *The Conscience of a Man will sus-*

tain

• 1 Cor. ii. 11,

and the Torments of a guilty one. 191

tain his Infirmities; but an evil or guilty **SERM. 2**
Conscience who can bear? Does not the **IX.**
Matter of the former Proposition plainly
determine Conscience to a good Conscience?
For can a *bad* one support us under our Af-
flictions? Nay, does not the latter Clause
say the direct contrary, *A wounded Spirit*
who can bear? It would be needless and im-
pertinent to observe, that the Word here
render'd *Infirmity* might be render'd *Dis-*
ease; the Word *wounded*, *smitten* or *broken*,
&c. And so passing over these unedifying
Niceties, I proceed to discourse upon the
Text thus explain'd, in the following Or-
der.

I. I SHALL shew what is a *sound* or *good*,
and what is a *wounded*, *evil*, or *guilty*
Conscience.

II. THAT a *good Conscience* will enable
us to bear all the Troubles and Af-
flictions of this World. *The Spirit of*
a Man will sustain his Infirmities.

III. THAT a *guilty Conscience* is of all
Plagues and Torments the most insup-
portable. *A wounded Spirit who can*
bear?

IV. I

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SERM. IV. I SHALL give such *Advice* and *Direction* as shall seem proper with relation to this Subject.

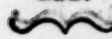
I. *First* then, What is a *sound* or *good*, and what is a *wounded*, *evil*, or *guilty* Conscience. *Conscience* itself is that Faculty of Mind, by which a Man judges concerning the Moral Goodness or Evil of his own particular Actions. I say *his own*, because *Conscience* relates wholly to a Man's self, not at all to Others; unless so far as those Others affect Himself. I do not pretend that this is a full, exact, and *scholastical* Definition, according to Art and Form; but perhaps it is the more useful for not being so. This is as much as we need take notice of at present, with regard to the Subject in which we are engaged. Now though it is plain that in the Notion of *Conscience* in *general* our *future* Actions are included no less than our *past*; as when we deliberate and judge whether such or such a Thing, before we do it, be good, or evil, or indifferent, whether we lawfully may, or may not, do it, or forbear it, &c. yet a good or evil Conscience in *particular* relates solely

ly to the *past*, to what we have actually SERM.
done, or forborn; when we consider, re- IX.
flect, and judge, whether we have, or have
not, done our Duty, in doing, or not do-
ing, this or that particular Thing. I say
not doing, as well as *doing*: For that there
are Sins of *Omission*, as well as of *Commis-*
sion, no tolerably well instructed *Christian*
can want to be inform'd. When therefore
a Man's Mind, reflecting upon his past
Actions, and judging of them according to
the Rule of Reason and Religion, *i. e.* the
Law of God; Natural or Revealed, or both,
approves of, applauds, and congratulates
himself upon what he has done or forborn,
he is then said to have a *good* Conscience:
A *bad* one is the contrary; when he ac-
cuses and condemns himself upon the same
Retrospect. I said, judging according to
the Law of God, which is the right Rule of
Conscience; because we may err in this Mat-
ter, and there is an *erroneous* Conscience,
as well as erroneous Judgments about any
thing else. There is likewise a *doubtful*,
and a *scrupulous* Conscience; between which
two there is a wide Difference, however
they are commonly mistaken for each other.

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SERM. The *first* proceeds upon some intelligible

IX. Ground or Reason of Doubt and Suspicion:

 The *second* upon nothing but mere Fancy and Imagination, arising from Weakness and Distemper of Mind or Body, or both. He who is in the *former* Situation ought to get his Conscience better informed: He who labours under the *latter* Distemper ought likewise to take Advice; and being instructed by a competent Judge that they *are* mere Scruples, he ought to despise and over-rule them, and act in direct Opposition to them. And the Reason is obvious: Because those troublesome, fluttering Thoughts and Ideas have no Reason in them, and so the Person should assert his *Christian* Liberty, by *breaking those Bonds asunder*, and *casting away those Cords from him* *. He thinks his Conscience wounded, when in truth it is not: Or (not to dispute about Words) if it must be call'd a *wounded Conscience*, it is so without Reason; and it is his *Misfortune*, not his *Fault*. If it be a *wounded Conscience*, it is not a *guilty* one, which is what we here mean; and that is sufficient. 'Tis true indeed, on the other hand,

and the Torments of a guilty one. 195

hand, a Man may think That to be a mere SERM.
ungrounded Scruple, which is really a *reason-* IX.

able Doubt : But then his Adviser will tell him so, and direct him how to proceed. But to make it plain what we mean by a *sound* or a *good*, by a *wounded* or a *guilty* Conscience, we will instance only in *plain* Cases. Has a Man committed Murder, Adultery, or Fornication? Is he unjust, unmerciful, profane, perjur'd, a Neglector of God's Worship both publick and private, &c. ? And does not his *Heart smite* him for this? Is he troubled, uneasy, haunted with Fears and Apprehensions for it? That's a *wounded* or *guilty* Conscience. Has he been strictly just, charitable, pious, devout, chaste, temperate, &c. ? And is he comforted and delighted with it? That's a *sound* or *good* Conscience. But it may be said, (that we may here obviate an Objection, since it belongs partly to *this* Head, though partly to *another*) If this which we have stated be a *wounded Conscience*, and if that be so dreadful, nay intolerable a Thing, as I have now asserted, and propose hereafter to shew, how comes it that a broken Heart upon the account of Sin (and what is *that*

196 *The Comforts of a good Conscience,*

SERM. but a wounded Conscience?) is spoken of
 IX. in *Scripture* as very desireable, and to be
 pray'd *for*, rather than pray'd *against*? I
 answer, There is a great Difference between
 a *mere* guilty Conscience, and a guilty Con-
 science with something else *superadded* to it.
 What we *here* speak of is *pure* Guilt. What
 is meant in the *other* Case is indeed a Sense
 of Guilt, but *moreover* an ingenuous Ha-
 tred of Sin, and of Ourselves for having
 committed it, proceeding from the Love of
 God, and a Sense of our horrible Ingrati-
 tude to him. The *first* is what we com-
 monly call *Attrition*, i. e. the Fear of Pu-
 nishment only: The *other* is both That and
Contrition too, i. e. a Sorrow for Sin, and
 an ingenuous Hatred of it, as I said before,
 and proceeding from the Principle just now
 mention'd. *The Sacrifices of God are a*
troubled Spirit; a broken and a contrite Heart,
O God, shalt thou not despise, says the Royal
 * *Psalmist*: And a godly Sorrow that worketh
Repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of,
 says the † *Apostle*. Now this *last* is a Pain
 indeed, but 'tis a Pain mix'd with great
 Pleasure. The Person rejoices in his very
 Grief,
 * Psalm li. 17. † 2 Cor. vii. 10.

and the Torments of a guilty one. 197

Grief, and would be grieved for the Want SERM.
of it. But the *wounded Spirit* or *Conscience* IX.

we are now talking of is pure, unmix'd
Guilt, which is pure, unmix'd *Torment*.

There is Sorrow for Sin indeed, but 'tis only for Fear of Punishment; no Hatred of it for its own sake on the one hand, nor for God's sake on the other; no Repentance, no Design or Purpose of Reformation.

HAVING thus shewn under my *First* Head, what is a *sound* or a *good*, what a *wounded*, *evil*, or *guilty* Conscience, I proceed now to consider under my *Second*,

II. THAT a *good Conscience* will enable us to bear all the Troubles and Afflictions of this World. *The Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmities*. If the ancient moral *Heathen* could (as they did) call a good Conscience a *Wall of Brass*, how much more may we *Christians*? It is indeed a sure Coat of Mail, or Armour of Proof, against all the Arrows and Storms of Fortune; they may rattle against the Surface, or perhaps for a little time hang upon it, but cannot enter or make any considerable Impression. Such is the *Infirmity* here spoken of in the

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SERM. Text, the *Infirmity* of our frail, weak, mortal Nature and imperfect State; that Losses, IX. Disappointments, cross Accidents, the various Troubles and Molestations we meet with in the common and ordinary Affairs of Life, much more great and grievous Pains, Afflictions, Injuries, Calumnies, Persecutions, &c. are, and will be, in some measure Evils even to the best of Men. But then the *good Conscience* they enjoy will enable them not only to bear up under their Pressures, but to turn those Evils into Good, those Pains into Pleasures. Being conscious to themselves, that they have done their Duty, and therefore are in God's Favour; they know, according to that of the *Apostle*, that * *All things shall work together for their Good*. Or perhaps the Conscience of such a Man, though good in the main, is not quite so good as it ought to be: And then he makes this excellent Use of Troubles and Afflictions, to examine himself more strictly, and search out and discover some secret Sin, which before he did not observe. Thus he makes his Conscience itself better than it was; and then again that enables him

* Rom. viii. 28.

him yet better to sustain his Afflictions, SERM.
may even to enjoy them, and bless God for IX.

them. However it be, he reaps this Advantage from them, that he has an Opportunity of exercising that most Christian, and to God most acceptable, Virtue *Patience*: Which again is Matter to him of great Comfort and Joy. In the Decline of Life, when not only the violent and rapid Pleasures of *Youth*, and lusty *Manhood*, are at least impaired, and greatly abated, if not quite lost, but even the more sober and gentle Diversions, and Amusements, pall and flatten upon him, so that he finds little or no Entertainment from them, the comfortable Reflections upon his past well-spent Life will more than supply the Place of all these, and be more stable and permanent, as well as rational and intellectual, than any of his former Enjoyments. *Old Age* now comes on; which is in a Manner nothing but one continued Sickness or Disease, a Complication of Infirmities. The * *evil Days* are come, of which we must say, that *we have*, and can have, *no Pleasure in them*. In them, i. e. *by* or *from* them: For we may

O 4

have

* Ecclef. xii. 1.

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SERM. have Pleasure from something else during
 IX. their Continuance; otherwise this would
 be contrary to what I am now proving,
 and to the real Truth of the Matter. † *De-
 fire shall fail*, as the Royal Preacher speaks
 in his admirable Description of Old Age;
i. e. the Appetite to all sensible Good shall
 be deadened, and the Relish of it in a man-
 ner lost: But a *good Conscience*, that ‡ *con-
 tinual Feast*, will be a far greater Pleasure
 than the richest Variety of the choicest
 Meats, than || *Wine that makes glad the Heart
 of Man, and Oil that maketh the Face to shine.*
 The *good old Man*, notwithstanding the In-
 firmities of Age, will be placid and easy,
 not only to himself, but to every body else;
 agreeable, as well as instructive, to all about
 him. After *Old Age*, or rather *in it*, comes
Death. It *must* come then, it *may* at any
 other Time. And as it is common to All,
 I shall consider it accordingly, without any
 View to *Old Age* in particular. *Death* is
 introduced by *Sickness* and *Diseases*: These
 are *Infirmities* in the highest and strictest
 Sense, and are called by that Name in se-
 veral Places of Scripture. Now nothing
 but

† Eccles. xii. 5. ‡ Prov. xv. 15. || Psalm civ. 15.

but a good Conscience can so fortify us, as to SERM.
make us sustain these in any tolerable De- IX.
gree, and that most certainly can and will.

This will be more than a Balance to all the Pains, Weaknesses, and Faintings the dying Man suffers, and will make him easy both to himself, and to all that attend him and minister about him. And then for *Death* itself, though it be an Enemy to our *Animal Nature*, it is not so to our *Spiritual*, but the direct contrary; and a good Conscience will make us not only to bear it with *Patience*, but embrace it with *Joy*: Because *Death temporal* is but our Passport to *Life eternal*. Upon the Whole, whether we are in Health or Sicknes, in Life or Death, that of the *Psalmist*, so elegantly and emphatically express'd, is most true, and can never be too frequently revolv'd by us: * *Unto the Godly there ariseth, or springeth, up Light in the Darknes*. And in another Place: † *In the midst of my Thoughts, i. e. sorrowful and anxious Thoughts, which I had in my Heart, thy Comforts have refresh'd my Soul*.

HAVING

• Psalm cxii. 4.

† Psalm xciv. 19.

202 *The Comforts of a good Conscience,*

SERM. HAVING thus shewn under my *First*

IX. Head, what is a *good* and an *evil* Conscience, and under my *Second* that the *former* will enable us to bear all the Troubles and Afflictions of this World, I proceed now to shew under my *Third*,

III. THAT the *latter* is of all Plagues and Torments the most insupportable. *The Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmary, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* This proceeds from *two* Causes: *1st*, The inherent Turpitude, Foulness, and Baseness of Sin in itself: *2dly*, The Prospect of Punishment due to it. From the former arises *Shame*, from the latter *Fear*: And what cruel, tormenting Passions both those are, I mean in their Height, and without any thing mingled with them to temper and allay them, nobody that knows human Nature can want to be informed. The *first* is so quick a Sentiment, that we are covered over with Blushing and Confusion, even for Faults and Follies which we are sure are secret, and known only to God and ourselves. And as for the Apprehension of Divine Vengeance, *Fear hath Tor-*
ment,

and the Torments of a guilty one. 203

ment*, says St. John; and this Fear of all SERM.
Fears has the greatest: So great, that no IX.
thing but the actual Feeling of that Ven-
geance can exceed it. Thus when, according to the Expression of my Text, and of
St. Paul †, the *Conscience is wounded*, i.e.
violated and defloured, and has Violence
offered to it, by the Commission of Sin, to
which it is always reluctant and averse, it
wounds as well as is wounded; it amply
revenges one Wound by the Infliction of a
thousand, and those the deepest and most
ghastly that the Soul is capable of suffering.
It accuses, judges, and condemns, and in a
great measure executes too, even in this
Life, though the Fulness of Punishment is
reserv'd for the next: I say it is at once Ac-
cuser, Witness, Judge, and Executioner.
As for the most flagitious and horrid Crimes,
as *Murder, Sacrilege, wilful deliberate*
Perjury, join'd with *Robbery*, or *false Wit-*
nessing, &c. it would be insisting too long
upon a *Common-Place*, to be large in de-
scribing the Plagues and Horrors of such
evil and wounded Consciences. The Hea-
then

* 1 John iv. 18.

† 1 Cor. viii. 12.

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SERM. then themselves have painted them in very
IX. strong Colours:

• ——— *Quos diri conscia Facti
Mens habet attonitos, & surdo Verbere
cædit,
Occultum quatiente ANIMO TORTORE Fla-
gellum:*

says *one* of them, concerning the secret in-ward Girds, Stings, Lashes, and Tortures of a Mind thus guilty. These are Things which *Children* learn at School, though they can never too often and seriously consider them when they are *Men*: And if they are *wicked Men*, they cannot but be sensible of their Truth. *There* too they are told of the Wretches who tremble and turn pale at every Flash of Lightning, or Clap of Thunder:

† *Hi sunt qui trepidant, & ad omnia ful-
gura pallent:*

Of † *Caligula's* running under his Bed af-
frighted at the Glare and Noise of those
Meteors;

• JUVENAL Sat. xiii. † Ibid.

† *Qui Deos tantopere contemneret, ad minima Tonitrua &
Fulgura connivere, caput obvolvère, ad verò majora proripere
se è Strato sub Lectumque condere solebat. SÆTON. in CALIG.*

and the Torments of a guilty one. 205

Meteors; of *one* Malefactor on *Earth*, and SERM.
another in *Hell* having a *Vulture* in their IX.
Breast preying upon their Entrails, design'd
(as 'tis suppos'd) for an allegorical Representation of a *guilty Conscience*. Guilt makes the Wretch who labours under it the vilest and most abject of *Cowards*, i. e. of all Creatures the most miserable: He starts at his own Shadow, and shudders at the shaking of a Leaf: * *The Sound of a shaken Leaf shall chase him.* † *The Wicked flee when no Man pursueth; but the Righteous are bold as a Lion.* Guilt marrs and murders all temporal *Good*, and aggravates and adds fresh Bitterness to all temporal *Evils*. Is the Man in Prosperity? Guilt turns it into Adversity. Is he in Adversity? Sin is the Sting of Afflictions, as well as of Death. The Wound of *Conscience*, like other Wounds, cannot bear the least Touch; but every Breath of Air makes it smart and fester. The Load of Guilt has to some been so intolerable, that thinking to find Ease, they have voluntarily confessed it, though they knew certain and immediate Death, the Gallows and the Halter, would be the Consequence.

* Levit. xvii. 36.

† Prov. xxviii. 1,

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SERM. sequence. Thus *Murders* and other horrid

IX. Crimes, but *Murders* especially, have sometimes been discover'd: The miserable Men literally, and in fact, applying to themselves those Words of *Job*, *So that my Soul chuseth Strangling and Death, rather than my Life**. This, which we have been hitherto chiefly describing, is a *wounded* Conscience in the *bighest* and *worst* Sense, caused by the Perpetration of the *blackest* and most *beinous* Crimes. There are other innumerable *inferior* Guilts, some greater, some less, according to the Nature, and Quality, and Circumstances of the Sins committed. All these are *Wounds of Conscience*. But *all* Wounds of the *Body*, we know, are not equal and alike, either as to Pain or Danger: And 'tis the same as to those of the *Soul* or *Mind*. The Commission of *any* Sin wounds the Conscience more or less, at least it *ought* to do so; and if it does not, the Man is in a yet worse Condition; as I shall shew presently. And even these *inferior* Guilts have their Pain and Smart accompanying them; enough to embitter the good Things of this Life, and add new Edge and
Venom

*. *Job* vii. 15.

and the Torments of a guilty one. 207

Venom to its Evils; enough, in short, to SERM.
IX.
be vastly an Over-balance to all the Pleasures that Sin can afford, if there were no other Plague attending it, as there are many. In the Hour of *Death*, how dreadful must be the Retrospect upon a past, mispent, wicked Life! how dreadful the present Sense of habitual Sins, unrepented of, and unreformed! In *that* sad Hour, how dreadful must it be to have *Conscience*, which can be our only *Comforter*, prove our greatest *Tormenter*!

THIS being the Case, say the Atheists, Infidels, and harden'd Sinners, 'tis much better to do as *We* do; to have *no Religion*, and consequently *no Conscience*; to discard these superstitious tormenting Fears, and so make ourselves quiet and happy. Easily *said*, but not near so easily *done*. Have they found out the Secret to divest themselves of *Humanity*? Conscience is by God and Nature interwoven with the very Constitution of our Souls; and we can no more divest ourselves of *that*, than we can of our very *Being*. And the throwing aside of all Religion will gall the Conscience more than any thing else: For the Truth of which,
if

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SERM. if they would but speak the Truth, we
IX. might well appeal to the Consciences of ir-
religious Persons themselves. Much indeed
may be done for a time to stupify and stifle
it: But not to dispute about this, since it is
not material; let them take it how they
please, and suppose they can quite *extinguish*
this active Principle in their Breasts: How
bad soever a *wounded* or *guilty* Conscience
may be, a *fear'd* one, or none at all, is much
worse.

HAVING thus shewn under my *First*
Head what is a *sound* or a *good*, and what a
wounded, or an *evil* and *guilty* Conscience;
under my *Second*, that the *former* will sup-
port us under all the Troubles and Affli-
ctions of this Life; and under my *Third*,
that the *latter* is itself of all Plagues and
Torments the most insupportable: I pro-
ceed now, in the *Fourth* and *Last* Place,

IV. To give such *Advice* and *Directions*
as shall seem material with relation to this
great and important Subject. These in ge-
neral may be reduced to *two*, very plain
ones:

1st, To avoid *all* Sin.

2^{dly},

and the Torments of a guilty one. 209

2dly, IF we have fallen into *any*, imme- SERM.
diately to repent of and reform it. In other IX.

Words: To be infinitely careful *not* to
wound our Consciences; or, if we *have*
wounded them, to get them healed as soon
as possible. Sin being so *evil and bitter* a
Thing (as the Prophet * speaks) being its
own Punishment, and the worst of Plagues
even in this World, we should fly *from it*
as from the Face of a Serpent, as the wise
Son of Sirach † expresses it; a *Serpent*
whose Bite and Sting is far more painful to
the *Soul*, than that of any other can be to
the *Body*. Were this duly consider'd, it
would conquer all the Temptations and Pro-
mises of Pleasure, with which Sin entices
and allures us. On the other hand, of what
infinite Importance must it be to secure a
good Conscience, even as to *this* World, since
we are sure to meet with so many Troubles
and Afflictions in it; which a good Con-
science softens and sweetens, so as to make
them almost no Troubles or Afflictions at
all! Or if we have fallen into Sin, we must
immediately make our Retreat, repent of
it, implore God's Pardon for it, and ef-

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P

fectually

* Jeremiah ii. 19.

† Eccclus. xxi. 2.

210 *The Comforts of a good Conscience,*

SERM. fectionally renounce and forsake it. The

IX. *Wound* being made, let it be presently *heal'd*, not suffer'd to *fester* and *rankle*, which will render the Cure the more difficult. Or farther, if it has been *neglected*, still *cured* let it be; and the more Delay there has been made, the more Industry and Diligence must now be used. Thus in *general*; but to be a little more *particular*, I shall apply myself to *four* different Sorts of Persons, whose different Circumstances require a distinct Application.

1st, HARDEN'D Sinners, who have *little* or *no* Conscience at all.

2^{dly}, THOSE whose Consciences are wounded, and themselves terrified with the *greatest* Guilt, and the *biggest* Crimes.

3^{dly}, SINNERS of a *lower* Class.

4^{thly}, PERSONS of *over-tender* and *scrupulous* Consciences.

1st THEN to *harden'd* Sinners, who have *little* or *no* Conscience; or, as the Apostle St. Paul expresses it, *a Conscience seared with a hot Iron*.* These, as I said, are in the worst State of all; and, if they continue in it, must of necessity perish. They go on habitually

* 1 Tim. iv. 2.

and the Torments of a guilty one. 211

tually committing the grossest Sins without SERM.
any Remorse, Check, or Controul; with no IX.

Thought, or Sense of their Condition; either not owning that they *are* Sins, or not caring whether they are Sins or *no*. If, I say, they *continue* in this State, they must inevitably *perish*; for a Man can never *repent* of his Sins, without being *sensible* of them: And without *Repentance* there is no *Pardon*. Such a one as this therefore *wants* a wounded Conscience; *wounded*, not by *committing* Sin, but by *feeling* the Sins he has committed. To be *past feeling* (as the Apostle * expresses it) is to be in a dreadful Condition indeed. Caustics, Incisions, and Scarifications, are, we know, applied to such Distempers as the Patient himself is not sensible of, and which are therefore of all the most dangerous. And such a Person as I am now speaking of must *get* his Conscience *wounded*, in order to its being *cured*.

2dly, To those whose Consciences are wounded, and themselves terrified with the *greatest* Guilt, and the *biggest* Crimes: Such Crimes as I mentioned under the *foregoing* Head, when I described the most dreadful

P 2

Horrors

* Eph. iv. 19.

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SERM. Horrors and Agonies of a guilty Conscience.

IX. The Case of these Men is indeed very *dangerous*, but not *desperate*. Nay, they are not in the most deplorable Condition of Sinners, who *may* be saved: For those I applied to under the *foregoing* Particular are (as we have seen) in a worse: And yet even they *may possibly* repent, and be pardoned. Let not therefore the Persons with whom we are now concerned imagine that they are the worse, and in the more Danger, for labouring under these terrible Pangs and Wrings of Conscience: Those Terrors, if they make a right Use of them, may, nay certainly will, conduce to their Salvation. Let them repent with the * *strongest Crying and Tears*; cry *mightily* to Him who is † *mighty to save*; make all the Restitution they are able to any they have defrauded, wrong'd, or injur'd; devote all the remaining Part of their Lives to the Service of God, and the Good of Mankind; do Things signally and eminently virtuous; and then remember, that ‡ *though their Sins be as Scarlet they may be white as Snow, though they be red like Crimson they may be as Wool*; that

* Heb. v. 7.

† Isaiah lxiii. 1.

‡ Isaiah i. 28.

and the Torments of a guilty one. 213

that even *their* Souls may be saved in the SERM.
Day of the Lord *Jefus*, because *Jefus Chrift* IX.

* *died to fave even the chief of Sinners.* ~~~~~

3dly, To Sinners of a *lower* Clafs; better than those mention'd under the two *foregoing* Particulars, yet not *fo* good as they *should* be, nor perhaps as they themselves imagine they *are*. Some of them indeed may fancy themselves *worse* than they are: For there are Extremes on both Sides. But of this *latter* under the *next* Particular. At present I observe, that many may, and do, fancy themselves good *Chriftians*, when they are not *fo*. Their Consciences, though they in some measure admonish them, yet do not admonish them *enough*: At least they obey not the Dictates of their Consciences, as they *ought*. Do they not even habitually commit *many* Sins, and some of them *great* ones too, though not flagrantly heinous, scandalous, and taken notice of by the World? Then do they enough consider that there are Sins of *Omission*, as well as of *Commission*; and some of the *former* as bad, nay worse than some of the *latter*? Do they not neglect the Duties of *Prayer* and

P 3

Thank-

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SERM. *Thanksgiving, and the Worship of God both*

IX. *publick and private? Do they frequently receive the Holy Sacrament? Did they ever receive it at all? I ask them with what Conscience do they neglect this necessary Duty, so positively and expressly commanded by our Saviour? And what Right have they to give themselves a Dispensation from this Command, more than from any other, or from all the rest? In these, and many other Instances, if Men's Consciences are not wounded, I am sure they ought to be: And that is all I shall say of it at present.*

4thly, and Lastly, To Persons of over-tender and scrupulous Consciences I have the less to say here, because I have in great measure forestall'd myself under my First General Head; when I shew'd, that if they proceed upon mere Scruples without Reason, what they imagine to be a wounded, i. e. a guilty Conscience, is in truth not so. And when they hear the Terrors of such a Conscience described, they ought not to apply it to themselves, as having nothing at all to do with it. They may say indeed they feel it is so with them: But then I say it is without Reason; whereas those I spoke of under

my

my *last* Head feel it *with* Reason. I would SERM.
ask these Persons, Have they been guilty of IX.
Murder, Perjury, Sacrilege, or any such-
like *flagitious* Crimes? If they have *not*,
they are quite out of the Question, as to
what was then discoursed. It is true in-
deed, Persons may be without Ground or
Reason *merely* scrupulous in *some* Instances,
who have really committed great and grie-
vous Sins in *others*. Let them despise and
over-rule the *former*, and sincerely repent
of the *latter*: And let them be assured they
do sincerely *repent* of their Sins, if they are
heartily sorry for them, implore God's Par-
don for them, and, above all things, ef-
fectually *forsake* them. Let them not trouble
and vex themselves by enquiring upon what
Principle they forsook them; whether upon
Attrition or *Contrition*, *Fear* or *Love*. Upon
whatever *Principle* it was done, if their Sins
are *reform'd*, they are certainly *repented of*;
and if *repented of*, as certainly *pardon'd*.

UPON the Whole, let us not *flatter* our-
selves with presumptuous *Hopes* on the *one*
hand, nor *disquiet* ourselves with groundless
and unreasonable *Fears* on the *other*: And

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SERM. so I shall conclude all with that short Prayer
IX. of our excellent *Liturgy*:

*O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully bear our
Prayers, and spare all those who confess their
Sins unto thee; that they whose CONSCIENCES
by Sin are accused, by thy merciful Pardon may
be absolved, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

To whom, &c.



SERMON

SERMON X.

Concerning *Temptations.*

I COR. X. 13.

God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the Temptation also make a Way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

CONSIDERING the miserable SERM.
 Corruption of our degenerate Na- X.
 ture, the Number and Strength of
 our spiritual Enemies, and our own utter
 Inability of ourselves to resist them; one
 would be apt to despond, and give over the
 Cause as desperate and lost. Thus, I say, it
 would be, were we to consider only *one*
 Side of Things: But that is a very wrong
 and

SERM. and erroneous Use of our Reason. As we

X. ought on the *one* hand to be truly sensible of our Danger; so we ought on the *other* hand to reflect upon the *Possibility*, and even *Probability*, nay, if it be not our own Fault, the *Certainty* of our escaping it: And that with regard both to our own Powers, and to the Assistance which is afforded us. The *former* indeed of themselves are insufficient; but they are necessary too, and in Conjunction with the *latter* will not fail to be effectual. What this *Latter* is, we are taught by the Blessed Apostle in the Words of my *Text*, abounding with spiritual Consolation to all sincere Christians: *God is faithful, &c.* In discoursing upon which Words I shall give an Answer to these *four* Enquiries; the Resolution of which will, I think, take in all, that properly falls within the Compass of them.

I. WHAT is to be understood by *Temptation*, or being *tempted*; in the full Extent of the Phrase, as it is used in the Holy Scripture.

II. WHAT is meant by God's *making a Way to escape*, that we may be able to bear it.

III. WHAT

III. WHAT is the Ground and Reason of SERM.
that Clause, *God is faithful*, as here X.
used by St. Paul; and what it refers
to.

IV. UPON what Terms or Conditions we
are to expect the Divine Assistance in
our Temptations.

I. FIRST then, I am to consider what
is to be understood, &c. The Word *Ten-
tare*, or *Tentatio*, imports no more in its
genuine Signification, than *Trying* or *Pro-
ving*; and our Word *Temptation*, derived
from it, signifies just the same. Therefore
all *Incitements to Vice* are call'd *Temptations*,
because they are so many Proofs or *Trials*
of our Virtue; or rather Proofs, whether
we have any Virtue or no. Thus our Bles-
sed Saviour: *Simon, Simon, Satan hath de-
sired to have you, that he may sift you as*
Wheat *. And in other Places true Virtue
is compared to *Gold tried in the Fire* †:
The Difficulties we meet with shewing
what we truly and really are, like the Win-
nowing of Grain, or the Torturing of Me-
tal in the Furnace; and, like them both,
refining

* Luke xxii. 31.

† Job xxiii. 10. Rev. iii. 18.

SERM. refining and purging us from Vice, as the
 X. *former* is separated from *Chaff* by the *one*,
 and the *latter* from *Dross* by the other.

Now the undergoing or enduring of *Temptations* may be reduced to two Heads, strongly and clearly express'd in the *Greek* Language, *ἀνίστασθαι* and *ἀνίστασθαι*; or as it is well answer'd in the *Latin*, *sustinere* and *abstinere*; and in our own Language, as well as in either of the former, to *bear* and to *forbear*. They may indeed be *both* reduc'd to *one*, because when we *forbear* something *pleasant*, we by *so doing*, and for that very Reason, *bear* something *unpleasant*. To *abstain* therefore may be reckon'd as one Kind of *Suffering*, and so the former may be included in the latter. But this being observ'd by way of Caution, we take the Words in their more known and usual Sense. Every *Temptation* therefore is either an *Allurement* to something *agreeable*, but *unlawful*; or the *Prefsure* of something *grievous* and *afflictive*. Of the *former* Kind are the Baits and Snares of Riches, Honours, and sensual Pleasures, by which we are tempted to Covetousness, Ambition, and Intemperance. Of the *latter* Kind are all Afflictions, Troubles, and Distresses,

treffes, by which we are tempted to Dis-SERM.
contentment, Murmuring, and Impatience. X.

Now, though it happens (why it happens
so I cannot imagine) that the Word *Temptation* is by common Use and Custom almost wholly appropriated to the former of These, viz. to the *Enticements* of something *delightful* and *forbidden*; as it is, when we commonly talk of the *Temptations* of the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*: Yet in the holy Scriptures it is chiefly and most frequently apply'd to the latter; I mean the *Pressures* of *Affliction* and *Trouble*. When St. Peter, and the other Apostles, as I above mentioned it, were to be *sifted as Wheat*, it was by *Dangers* and *Persecution*: And in the same Chapter, * *Ye are they* (says our Blessed Saviour) *which have continued with me in my Temptations*; i. e. in my *Hardships*, *Pains*, and *Sufferings*. And thus St. Paul in his most excellent patheticall Exhortation to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*: † *Ye know from the first Day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all Seasons, serving the Lord with all Humility of Mind, and with many Tears*
and

* Luke xxii. 28.

† Acts xx. 19.

SERM. and Temptations, which beset me by the lying

X. in wait of the Jews. And surely a greater
 Temptation there cannot be to a Minister of the Gospel, than to have Men lie in wait for him, when he is endeavouring to convert them; to have them labour to destroy his Life, while he is labouring to save their Souls. But it is not to be expected that in this, or any thing else, the Servants should fare better than the Master of the Household, of whom it is recorded in Scripture, that his Enemies several times tempted him, both by endeavouring to puzzle him with hard Questions, and by requiring of him a Sign from Heaven; but more particularly to our present Purpose in Luke xi. 53, 54. And as he said these Things unto them, the Scribes and Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many Things; laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his Mouth, that they might accuse him. Which is exactly the Property of the Devil, to be first the Tempter, and then the Accuser: These two being the principal Characters of that grand Apostate. And a very easy Matter it is to accuse any body, if the arbitrary and forced

forced Interpretation of one Man shall be SERM.
allowed to pass for the real Meaning of **X.**
another.

IN like manner St. Paul, * *My Temptation which was in my Flesh ye despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an Angel of Light, even as Jesus Christ.* By his *Temptation in the Flesh* he undoubtedly means the same which he elsewhere calls † *a Thorn in the Flesh, a Messenger of Satan to buffet him*; i. e. according to the Interpretation of the best Expositors, some bodily Imperfection, or Distemper, which troubled and afflicted him.

THUS likewise St. Peter, ‡ *Wherefore ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in Heaviness through manifold Temptations. That the Trial of your Faith being much more precious, than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* Here too it is evident that by the *Temptations* he speaks of are meant the *Afflictions* and *Persecutions* which the first Christians underwent for the Trial of their Faith and Sincerity. And in the

* Gal. iv. 14. † 2 Cor. 12. 7. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

SERM. the same Apostle's Second Epistle, Ch. ii. 9.

X. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptations; i. e. out of Afflictions, as it appears from the Antithesis in the Words which immediately follow, and to reserve the Unjust to the Day of Judgment to be punished. And lastly, to mention no more at present, our Blessed Saviour speaks thus to the Church of Philadelphia, * Because thou hast kept the Word of my Patience, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth; i. e. (as it plainly appears from the Coherence of the Words) because thou hast already given sufficient Proof of thy Constancy by thy Sufferings, I will exempt thee from those sore Calamities with which other Churches shall be exercised, in order to prove whether their Constancy be the same. That the Word is used in the same Sense in the first Chapter of St. James's General Epistle, I shall have occasion to observe hereafter. And thus indeed the Word *Tento* is continually taken by the best *Latin* Writers, when applied to Men; as that of *Horace*, *Doluit tentatum frigore**

* Rev. iii. 10.

frigore Corpus; and of *Cicero*, *Tentationes* SERM.
Morborum. X.

BUT though this be the most usual Sense of that Expression, both in *Scripture* and in the *Latin* Authors, when apply'd as I said; yet that other above-mentioned is manifestly included in it in the sacred Writings, is very often intended by it, and altogether as properly belongs to it. True Virtue is Proof both against the Warmth of Pleasure and the Hardship of Pain; and is neither to be melted by the one, nor to be broken by the other. When the Devil, at different Times, assaulted *David* and *Job*, he was properly a Tempter to them both; but he was so by *Bathsheba* to the former, and by *Beggary* and *Boils* to the latter.

WHICH reminds me of another Observation, that in order to a full and clear State of the Matter contained under this Head, it is necessary to consider, not only the Things, but the Persons Tempting. The first and principal of these (as I hinted before) is the Devil, who is called *The Tempter*, *ὁ ὀφειλόμενος*, by way of Eminency or Distinction. The Means and Methods which he makes use of in the Exercise of this his

SERM. diabolical Function are many and various;
 X. more indeed than we understand; nor is it
 possible we should understand them, unless
 we were as well acquainted with the Na-
 ture of Body and Spirit, and the Union of
 both, as he is. In general, he does it from
without, by putting us in the Way of
 tempting Objects, and by rightly directing
 and applying them to us: From *within* by
 injecting wicked Thoughts and Motions in-
 to our Minds, by moving the Springs of the
 sensitive Appetite, either inflaming or de-
 jecting the Blood and Spirits, according to
 our different Tempers and Constitutions,
 and according as either best serves the Pur-
 pose he aims at. Under him *wicked Men*
 are often his *Ministers* and *Managers*, his
 delegated *Agents*, his *Deputy-Tempters*, not
 content to be wicked themselves, but doing
 their best Endeavours to make others so.
 These are the Persons of whom the Apostle
 speaks; *Who not only do such Things, but have*
*Pleasure in them that do them.**

BUT here arises a Difficulty: God is some-
 times in *Scripture* said or supposed to tempt
Men. And is not that very strange? It is

* Rom. i. ult.

so; but in the Scripture it is positively said S E R M.
that he ~~never~~ tempts us. That indeed seems X.
to remove *one* Difficulty, but at the same
time it seems to create a *greater*. Because
those Places appear directly to oppose and
contradict each other. For the full clear-
ing and adjusting of which Matter, I shall
shew in what Sense God *does*, and in what
Sense he *does not* tempt us; for the whole
Difficulty turns upon the uncertain Signifi-
cation of the Word. And I shall also shew
the Difference between *this* Temptation,
and those of the *Devil*, as to the Nature
and End of both.

It is indeed said that * *God did tempt*
Abraham. And one of the Petitions of
the Lord's Prayer is, *Lead us not into Tempt-*
ation: Which seems to imply that some-
times he *does* lead us into Temptation. And
yet St. James says expressly, † *Let no Man*
say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God;
for God cannot be tempted of Evil, neither
tempteth he any Man. Before I come to the
direct Solution of the Question itself, I here
think it requisite separately to explain one
Clause of the Text last cited; because tho'

more vno ion not Q 2 it

* Gen. xxii. 1.

† James i. 13.

SERM. it is somewhat distinct from the Subject we

X. are now upon, yet has it a near Affinity or Relation to it. 'Tis not referr'd to God's tempting us, (which is what we are immediately and directly considering) but to his being tempted himself. Concerning which likewise there seems to be a Repugnancy in the Holy Scriptures. Several Places both of the *Old* and *New Testament* assure us that the *Jews* often tempted God, and that others may do so: And yet St. *James* here tells us that *God is not tempted of Evil*. To which I answer, that foolish and wicked Men may make *sceptical* or *presumptuous Trials* or *Experiments* of his *Power* and *Veracity*, as the *Jews* not believing, and others over-believing have done: So far, and in that Sense, he may be tempted. But he cannot be in the least allured, enticed, or inclin'd to Evil: So far, and in that Sense, he cannot be tempted.

AND this may in some measure help us to a Solution of the Difficulty which is the direct and immediate Subject of our present Enquiry, concerning God's tempting, and not tempting Men, and the Way to reconcile those seemingly contradictory Propositions. It appears therefore not only from

that I have said

that I have said this

this Chapter of St. James which we are now SERM. 2
 considering, but from Reason itself, that X.X
 there is a two-fold Temptation: The one
 wholly consisting in proving and trying; the
 other in that, and in something more, viz.
 in not only soliciting us to sin, but in an
 evil and vicious Solicitation, as by our own
 Lusts from within, and by the Devil from
 without. Now in the former of these Senses
 God may and does tempt us; i. e. prove, try,
 and examine us; but it is only in order to
 make us happy, because without such Trial
 we could not be truly virtuous. And there-
 fore David even prays for Temptation in
 this Sense, * Try me, O Lord, and seek the
 Ground of my Heart; prove me, and examine
 my Thoughts: Look well if there be any Way
 of Wickedness in me; and lead me in the Way
 everlasting. And St. James in the Chapter
 we are now upon, † My Brethren, count it
 all joy, when ye fall into divers Temptations:
 Knowing that the Trial of your Faith worketh
 Patience. From whence by the way it ap-
 pears that the Word Temptation is here like-
 wise to be taken in the Sense I above men-
 tioned, for Afflictions and Distresses. And

Q 3

then

* Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

† Ver. 2. 3.

SERM. then again, * *Blessed is the Man that endu-*

X. *reth Temptation: For when he is tried he shall*
receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord
hath promised to them that love him. But in
the latter of these Senses, viz. as the Word
implies an evil and vicious Solicitation, God
does not, cannot tempt us, for he can no
way, and in no Degree, be the Author of
Sin.

YET when our Saviour commands us to
 pray God *not to lead us into Temptation*, He
 cannot mean it in the former Sense of *Try-*
ing and Proving: For that, as I said, is to be
 pray'd for, rather than to be pray'd against.
 But according to the Hebrew Idiom of Ex-
 pressing, (which the inspired Penmen of the
 New Testament, though writing in another
 Language, perpetually make use of,) *Not*
leading us into Temptation, is not suffering
 us finally to fall by it; and that Petition of
 the Lord's Prayer is the same, as if the
 Words of my Text should have been re-
 duced into a Prayer, that God would not
 suffer us to be tempted above what we are able,
 but would with the Temptation also make a
 Way

* Ver. 12.

Concerning Temptations

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Way to escape, that we might be able to bear SERM. 2
it. X

FROM what has been hitherto discoursed may appear the Difference between that *Temptation* which comes from *God*, and that which comes from the *Devil*. The former is to try and prove us, the latter is to ensnare and destroy us. But then again we must carefully observe, that this very trying and proving, as from *God*, is not with relation to him, but to ourselves: He wants no Information concerning us: By his Omniscience he knows already what we are, and what we shall be. But it is necessary with regard to ourselves that we should be so tried; because without it our *Virtue* cannot be exercised, and drawn out into Practice.

THE Truth is, this Life itself, in general, is a State of *Temptation* or *Trial*, and was always intended to, be so: A *Christian* can no more shew his *Virtue* without *Temptation*, than a *Soldier* can shew his *Courage* without an *Enemy*. Yet some Conditions of Life are more especially exposed than others, and such particularly are *Times of Danger and Difficulty*, with relation to publick Affairs. Such are commonly and very pro-

SERMON. perly called *trying Times*: In them Difficulties will often occur, not only in Point of *Prudence*, but in Point of *Conscience*. Whatever one says or does, nay whatever almost one does *not* do, or does *not* say, is liable to be reflected upon by somebody or other, nay by great Numbers on either Side, when very often neither the former nor the latter know for what Reason those Reflections are made. Other People will pretend to be better Judges of our Consciences than we ourselves, and to fix and ascertain our *Meaning* by their *Expositions*. But in this, or in any other Instance, how great soever the *Temptation* may be, God will certainly do his Part to rescue and deliver us. Which brings me to consider under my *Second General Head*,

II. WHAT is meant by God's making a *Way to escape*, that we may be able to bear it. Now to the Solution of this Question, the Words themselves will in a great measure direct us, though at first Sight they may appear somewhat particular and extraordinary. He will make a *Way to escape*, that ye may be able to bear it. Here it may be objected,

jected, How can we be said to *escape* what we *bear*, or to *bear* what we *escape*? To which SERM. X.

I answer, That we may be very properly said to *escape* a Thing *two* ways; by being either deliver'd from the Thing *itself*, or from any *Evil* and *Mischief* which might be occasioned to us *by* that Thing. One way or other therefore he will provide for our Safety, either by bringing us *out* of the Temptation, or by supporting us *under* the Temptation: He *will make a Way to escape*, *that we may be able to bear it*, i. e. he will so *shorten* the Time, or so *add* to our *Strength*, that we may not be *overcome* by it; and either of those Ways we effectually escape it. For the *latter* of these therefore, (for that being the most considerable, I shall begin with it) God makes good the Promise here mentioned by giving us Grace to *resist* the *Allurements* of *Pleasure*, and *endure* the *Pressures* of *Pain*, so that we may finally conquer *both*. He enables us to judge so wisely concerning the Enticements of forbidden Delights, as bravely to *abstain* from them; and concerning the Terrors and Anguish of Afflictions, as bravely to *suffer* and *surmount* them. And upon this *last-mentioned* I shall

more

SEEM more particularly insist, according to the
 XX Method I have hitherto observed. He gives
 us Strength to bear up under the Calami-
 ties and Distresses of Life; Losses, Disap-
 pointments, Sickness, Poverty; under the
 injurious Treatment we receive from for-
 ward, perverse, malicious, and unreasona-
 ble Men; from *Enemies*, and (which is far
 worse) from *Friends*. Friends, I mean, as
 they are often, though very improperly
 called. He strengthens us to endure even
 that sore Evil, *Falseness*, and *Ingratitude*; to
 shew indeed a just and manly Resentment,
 but no Unchristian Reprisals: In a Word,
 to reason like Men and Christians, upon the
 base Usage we receive from Others, to slight
 their Censures and injurious Reflections, to
 wrap ourselves up in our Innocence and Vir-
 tue, not considering so much what is said
 without us, as what passes within us. I have
 more particularly mentioned the unworthy
 Treatment we sometimes meet with, espe-
 cially from *pretended Friends*; because there
 is scarce any greater or more grievous Tempt-
 ation; especially in Times of *Danger* and
Difficulty. Those, as I said, are *trying* or
tempting Times. They are so in *all* Respects,
 but

but particularly in the Case of *Friendship*. SERM. 2
 In short, God, who will not suffer us to be XX
 tempted above what we are able, conducts us
 through Difficulties, directs us what to do,
 or say, in doubtful and arduous Cases: Which
 is one of the greatest Instances of his Pro-
 vidential Care over us. But then, as he
 supports us under these Trials, so, in the se-
 cond Place, when he thinks fit, and when
 it is for our real Benefit, he delivers us out
 of them. As he comforts, refreshes, and
 cheers us under them, so when in his infi-
 nite Wisdom he sees proper, he entirely re-
 moves them. Indeed he does both, first of
 last, in this Life or in the next, to his true
 and faithful Servants, as it is expressed in
 our Liturgy: *Giving them Patience under*
their Sufferings, and a happy Issue out of all
their Afflictions. Thus much for the Se-
 cond Head, what is meant by God's making
 a Way to escape the Temptation, that we may
 be able to bear it.

III. I come now to the Third, under
 which I am to shew what is the Ground and
 Reason of that Expression, *God is faithful*,
 as it is here used by the Apostle, and what it
 refers

SERM. refers to. It refers then to the *Promises*

X. which God has made us, and which by his
 immutable *Faithfulness*, or *Justice*, he cannot but perform. Nor is it by an arbitrary Exposition that I have join'd these two Words together, and made the one explanatory of the other. For that such is the true Sense of it, appears from several Places of Scripture; but especially from that of St. John, * *He is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, &c.* Now the Texts both of the Old and New Testament, in which God promises us his Assistance in Dangers both Temporal and Spiritual, are so numerous, that we need not mention any. He is faithful then, and therefore will succour us: He has promised to do so, and his *Faithfulness* or *Justice* obliges him to perform it. Between Men and Men there are two Sorts of Rights, some original, some transferred. And a Right in one always supposes a correspondent Obligation in another: And so on the Reverse. Rights and Obligations, I mean, strictly and properly so called: Which Clause, were it well attended to, would prevent much unnecessary Dispute about these

these Matters. What an *original Right* is SERM.
requires no Explanation: And a Right may X.
be *transferr'd*, or made over, several Ways: 
Not only by exprefs Compacts, Bargains,
or Covenants, concluded upon certain Con-
ditions, and in which both Parties yield
something, and acquire something; but also
by voluntary gratuitous Promises, and those
too either *absolute* or *conditional*. Of this
last Kind are all the Rights which God trans-
fers to *Men*, with relation to *himself*. Tho'
both in the Writings of Divines, and in the
Holy Scriptures themselves, mention is often
made of *Covenants* between him and us; yet
they are Covenants only by an *Analogy*, not
in *Strictness*, as those are which are made
between Men and Men, in which both
Parties have an original Right, as to one
another, to treat or not to treat; and some-
thing, as I said, is granted and acquitted on
both Sides; But only a free gracious Pro-
mise of a Reward upon the Performance of
Conditions. And yet even this, if our
Words be rightly explained and understood,
may (I think) very consistently with a due
Sense of the infinite Majesty of Heaven on
the one hand, and the Vileness of us miser-
able

SERM. able Creatures on the other, be said to found

X. an Obligation upon God's Part, and a Right
 on ours. And therefore I conceive *Puffen-*
dorf is ever cautious, when speaking of
Rights transferred by Promises, he proceeds
 thus: * "But we must give Notice, by
 way of Caution, that these Things relate
 to Promises between Man and Man. For
 though it be impossible that the Divine
 Promises should deceive us, yet it seems
 too arrogant to assert that any Mortal
 can pretend a Right from God upon a
 Promise." This, I say, with Submission,
 seems too cautious. God is in one Sense
 obliged to perform his Promises; obliged, I
 mean, not by any Person, or Being, beside
 or distinct from himself; for that it would
 be both absurd and blasphemous to imagine;
 but obliged by his own Nature, by the eter-
 nal Reasons of Things; because should he
 do otherwise, he would act contrary to his
 own Nature, which is impossible. If then
 there be any Kind of Obligation on the one
 hand,

* Monendum est autem isthac pertinere ad promissa
 inter homines concepta. Nam etsi impossibile sit divina
 promissa fallere; nimis tamen superbum videtur dicere
 mortalem sibi ex promisso adversum Deum jus querere.
Puffend. De Jure Natur. & Gent. Lib. III. Cap. V. 97.

hand, (where two Persons are concern'd) SERM.
 there must be *some Kind of Right* on the *X.*
other. I say *some Kind of Right*, because
 I am far from pleading for the most absurd
 and impious Doctrine of *Popish Merit*, whe-
 ther *de condigno* or *de congruo*; (for after all
 their little Distinctions, those Phrases, when
 they are brought to any intelligible Sense,
 signify much the same) the *Doctrine of*
Merit I say, by which it is pretended that
 our good Works do in the *strictest* and most
proper Sense, in and of *themselves*, deserve
 a Reward from God, and may claim it in
 Point of *Justice*. But we understand a
 Right, only of an *inferior* and *less proper*
 Kind, not in the least arising from any
 thing in *us*, which may of *itself* deserve
 Reward; but such a one as is founded *solely*
 upon the free gracious Promise of God, and
 by that Promise wholly transferred to *us*,
 without any *Merit* of ours, *antecedent* or
consequent; founded, I say, upon the *free*
Promise of God, and our *Performance* of
 the *Conditions*, as far as we are able; the
 all-sufficient Merits of *Jesus Christ* supply-
 ing our manifold Defects. This, and this
 only, is the Reason of that Phrase of my
 Text,

SERM. Text, *God is faithful*; i. e. (as the Apostle X. expresses it in another Place) *he is faithful that hath promised* *. But then (as we have before hinted) this Promise is not *absolute*, but *conditional*. Which brings me to my *Fourth* and *Last* General Head, under which I proposed to shew,

IV. UPON what *Terms* or *Conditions* we are to expect the Assistance of God in our *Temptations*. That there are *Terms* or *Conditions required*, is not, I confess, expressed in my *Text*. But from other Places of Scripture (as well as from Reason and the Nature of the Thing itself) it is sufficiently evident, that the Performance of Conditions is necessary on our Part; and they may be reduced to these *Three*.

1. DOING the best of our own Endeavours.
2. PRAYING to God for his Assistance.
3. TRUSTING in him, or depending upon him, for the Performance of his Promises.

1st, DOING the best of our own Endeavours. If a powerful Prince assists a poor weak

* Heb. x. 23,

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weak State or Kingdom against an Enemy SERM.
 by whom it must otherwise be necessarily X.
 over-run and destroyed, it is to be expected
 that he should *only* assist that State or King-
 dom, not do all its Business *himself*, without
 any Action or Concurrence of its *own*. This
 is so unreasonable in the Nature of Things,
 that nothing need be said to expose its Ab-
 surdity. And this is exactly the Case be-
 tween God and us. *It is God* (says the
 Apostle of my Text in another Place) *that*
worketh in you both to will and do of his good
*Pleasure**. Therefore *what?* Are we to do
nothing? Quite otherwise. THEREFORE
work out your own Salvation, and that with
 the utmost Solitude and Anxiety, with
 Fear and Trembling†. The Force of which
 Reasoning is this: *God worketh, therefore*
you work yourselves; because you have *En-*
couragement to do so, otherwise you would
 have none, his *Assistance* rendering your *En-*
deavours successful. The War between us
 and our spiritual Enemies is a War of *Con-*
federacy or *Alliance* on both Sides; between
 the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil* on the
 one, and *God*, the holy *Angels*, and Our-
 VOL. II. R selves

* Phil. ii. 13.

† Ver. 12.

SERM. *selves on the other.* And here seems to be

X. *so prodigious a Disparity on our Side, so vast a Superiority to our Adversaries, that one would think it impossible we should miscarry, and would be apt to say with Elisha to his dismayed Servant, * Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them; considering that though the † fiery Darts of the Devil are continually flying round us, yet we have the heavenly Host, celestial Chariots and Horses of Fire to be our Guard and Defence against them. ‡ If God be for us, who can be against us? Who indeed to any Purpose, provided we will but do our own Part? But there is all the Danger; for he will most certainly do his. It is commonly and very truly said, God is stronger than the Devil; an Expression frequently and most impertinently used, as an Excuse for Laziness and Cowardice. No doubt, God is stronger than the Devil, and could, if he pleased, without any Assistance of ours, not only defeat and subdue him, but reduce him into nothing. But what would that be to us? Had we not Temptations from him, or from some other Quarter,*

II. where

* 2 Kings vi. 16, 17. † Eph. vi. 16. ‡ Rom. viii. 31.

where would be the *Trial* of our *Virtue*? SERM.
 Nay, where would be *any* *Virtue* in us at X.
 all? For there can be no *Virtue* in a State
 of Probation, as ours here was always in-
 tended to be, without the Danger of some
Vice. That our Endeavours therefore are
 required, proceeds not from God's wanting
 them; but from our wanting them our-
 selves. If it be ask'd, how shall we distin-
 guish our own Endeavours from God's Assis-
 tance, or the Motions of his Grace from our
 own Thoughts; I answer, I cannot tell,
 and I believe Nobody else can: But it is
 certain, from Reason and Scripture put to-
 gether, that such Things there are, and
 that they are and must be *distinct* in them-
 selves; tho' we know not how to distinguish
 them. *This* we know, and that is suffici-
 ent, that by his Assistance we *can* do Good
 and avoid Evil, and that we are at *Liberty*
 to act, or not to act.

2dly, THE next necessary Condition is
praying to God for his Assistance. When
 St. Paul was troubled with his *Thorn in the*
Flesh, a Messenger from Satan to buffet him,
 I prayed (says * he) to the Lord thrice, that

R 2

—it

* 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

SERM. *it might depart from me. And he said, My*

X. *Grace is sufficient for thee: And my Strength*
is made perfect in Weakness. We must do
 the best of our own Endeavours, (which we
 have seen under the foregoing Particular)
 so, being conscious of our own Inability,
 as of and from ourselves, we must constant-
 ly and earnestly pray for the Divine Suc-
 cours: Which we cannot reasonably hope
 for, unless in the

3^d and Last Place, We entirely *trust* in
 him, and *depend upon* him for the Perfor-
 mance of his Promises. Because without
this, the *other* will be to no Purpose: And
 that for Reasons which I have lately insisted
 upon from another Text of Scripture, in a
 Discourse upon which I hope I fully shew'd
 the Efficacy of *Faith* and *Prayer*, and of
 the former especially in the latter; which
 is the Reason likewise why I now say so
 little upon these two last Particulars.

NOTHING then remains before we shut
 up this Discourse, but that we make some
 short practical *Improvements* of what has been
 said. From what has been said therefore
 we may remark *two* Things; the one Mat-
 ter of *Caution*, the other of *Comfort*.

AND

AND first for *Caution*. That may regard SERM.
 either *others* or *ourselves*. As to *others*, X.
 considering the Variety of Temptations
 with which we are all encompassed, we
 should not be forward in *censuring* and *re-*
flecting upon them, especially in Matters of
 a difficult and doubtful Nature. I say, in
 Matters of a *difficult* and *doubtful* Nature,
 because I am sure no one can be farther
 than I am from palliating or smoothing
 over any kind of Prevarication in Principles
 or Practices: But at the same time I must
 say, that many rash and injurious Reflections
 have been cast upon some by others, in
 Matters of which those Censors are by no
 means competent Judges. With reference
 to *ourselves* much Caution is required. We
 are always in a State of *Temptation*, and
 therefore always ought to use the utmost
 Circumspection. Upon which Subject I
 shall only cite the Words of the Apostle just
 preceding those of my Text: *Let him that*
thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

2dly, As we have Matter of *Caution*, so
 we have Matter of *Comfort*. God will cer-
 tainly perform his Promise in aiding and
 protecting us: What then have we to fear,

SERMON. unless it be from ourselves? Hear the

X. blessed Apostle St. Paul in another Place:

For we would not, Brethren, have you ignorant of our Trouble, which happened unto us in Asia; that we were pressed out of Measure, above Strength, insomuch that we despaired even of Life. But we had the Sentence of Death in ourselves; that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the Dead. Who delivered us from so great a Death, and doth deliver us, and in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. And in another Part of the same Epistle, I am filled with Comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our Tribulation. For when we were come into Macedonia our Flesh had no Rest; but we were troubled on every Side; without were Fightings, within were Fears. Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus†.*

God then is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, &c. To Him therefore let us continually pray in the Words of our excellent Liturgy:

O God

* 2 Cor. viii. 9, 10.

† Chap. vii. 4, 5, 6.

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O God who knowest us to be set in the midst SERM.
of so many and great Dangers, that by reason X.
of the Frailty of our Nature we cannot al-
ways stand upright ; grant us such Strength
and Protection, as may support us in all Dan-
gers, and carry us through all Temptations,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



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SERMON

Concerning Temptations.

O God who knowest us to be in the midst of
of so many and great dangers, that by every
of the trials of our Nature we cannot be
any hand except thy strong and powerful
and Protection, in every danger we are in
give, and grant us deliverance from all
temptations. Amen.



SERMON XI.

The Importance of inferior Duties.

MATTH. XXIII. 23.

---These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

OUR *Blessed Saviour*, when he spoke SERM. these Words, was exposing the Hy- XI. pocrisy of those who, according to the *Proverbial* Expression then used, would **strain at a Gnat, and swallow a Camel*; or would with very tender Consciences stick at *small Sins*, and make no Scruple at great ones. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye pay Tithe of Mint, Anise, and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier Matters*

■ Ver. 24.

SERM. *Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and*

XI. *Faith. These ought ye to have done, and not*
 ~~~~~ *to leave the other undone.* It must be acknowledged therefore, that the main Stress of his Doctrine turns upon the *greater and more important* Duties: This being the Point he was directly insisting upon, according to the Scope and Tendency of his Argument; which was to reprehend the *Pharisees* for neglecting *the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, or Charity, and Faith:* But still the Clause concerning the *Tithe of Mint, Anise, and Cummin,* has its Force; and this Duty likewise *ought they to have done, or not to leave undone;* for it matters not to which Branch of the Text each of those Expressions severally relates, the Sense being the same either way, and all the Duties here mentioned being either way made necessary to be performed. The *least* are *necessary*, though they will not (as those Hypocrites would have had them) be accepted *in lieu of greater.*

IN the Systems of *Christian Morality*, the more *eminent* Virtues, and the more *flagrant* Vices, are the perpetual Subjects of Discourse; but very little Reflection has been made

made upon those which are of an *inferior* SERM.  
Consideration. My Discourse therefore shall XI.  
be wholly grounded upon that Part of the  
Text which relates to the *smaller Duties*;  
and because the Neglect of them is an Error of very dangerous Consequence, I shall attempt to discuss this Subject somewhat particularly, and in pursuance of that Design I shall proceed by the following Method.

- I. I SHALL consider the *precise Nature* of the *smaller* and *less regarded* Instances of Duty and Transgression, so as to adjust our Notions concerning them.
- II. I SHALL shew that in a *practical* and *moral* Sense *no* Duties or Sins, all things consider'd, can be *little*; and that it is necessary to have a strict Regard even to those which seem the *least* important of both.
- III. I SHALL offer some farther *Reflections*, which may prevail with us to avoid even the *smallest* Sins, and to make our Obedience *entire* and *complete*.

I. As



S E R M.

XI.

I. As to the *First* of these, *three* Things  
 seem observable.

1. IT is not here meant that we should trouble and perplex ourselves in point of Religion about *frivolous* Circumstances, which are neither *commanded* nor *forbidden*. Such a Trifle as this is not properly a *small Thing*, but *Nothing*: Nothing, I mean, in Religion, or to our present Purpose. It is fit for us indeed, and prudent to avoid not only what is *unlawful*, but what is *inexpedient*, nay whatever is *indecent* or *improper*: And these last are to be rank'd among those Things which are considerable in *common Life*, and are indeed not so much regarded as they ought to be. But let them be regarded still only as *Indecencies*, or *Improprieties*, not as *Sins*: For in respect of *Religion*, and the *Divine Laws*, I say, we should not be superstitious or scrupulous in multiplying the Lines of *Duty*, and making those Things *illegal* which God left *indifferent*. These therefore are *not* the small Things here intended.

2. IT is to be observed on the *other* hand,  
 That some Things *seem* to be *little*, which  
 are

are really far from being so; and some are SERM.  
actually so in one Respect, but not in others. **XI.**

The Beginnings of all Things are *little*, and yet they are of the greatest Importance imaginable. The Observation of some particular Modes of Worship in the *Church*, and of some Injunctions in the *State*, which are wholly *positive*, and have no *moral Goodness* in their own Nature, may, and, it seems, do to some, appear very trivial Circumstances: But supposing the Things are so in themselves, yet Obedience to Governors, both *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical*, is a very important Duty, be the Matter of their Commands in its own Nature never so *inconsiderable*. This therefore is not a small Thing, but only *seems* so: Or even if it were, the Performance of it would notwithstanding be necessary; as will appear from what shall be observed in its proper Place. At present I take notice,

3. THAT, excluding both the foregoing Particulars, the Things here meant are *real Duties* on the *one* hand, in Opposition to the *former*; and really *little ones* on the *other* hand, in Opposition to the *latter*. For though all Duties are necessary to be performed,

SERM. formed, as we have Power and Opportunity, yet they may, and do, differ in Magnitude. The Doctrine concerning the Equality of Vices and Virtues may well pass for a *Paradox*. It will be sufficient in this respect to consider either *Virtues* or *Vices*, because there is the same Reason for and against the Equality or Inequality of *both*. That all Sins then are not of the same Size, is evident from that Expostulation of the Royal Psalmist: \* *Who can understand his Errors? Cleanse thou me from secret Faults. Keep back thy Servant also from presumptuous Sins; let them not have Dominion over me: Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great Transgression.* Here is a manifest *Distinction* made between *small* and *great* Offences: And indeed, if *Scripture* were silent in this Matter, the Nature of the Thing itself is plain in common Reason: The several *Objects* of several Crimes, the various *Principles* from which they proceed, and the other *Circumstances* with which they are attended, make a most material Difference between them, in respect of Bulk and Dimensions. The † *idle Words*

\* Psalm xix. 13.

† Matth. xii. 36.

Words taken notice of by our Saviour, or SERM. the foolish Talking and Jesting mentioned by XI. St. Paul \*, are *Faults*, and must be repented of; but sure nobody will say that they are as great Faults as *Injustice* or *Uncharitableness*: All Sins, it is true, are alike Violations of Law; but still they differ in their precise specifick Natures; and, in a Word, though they are all *equally* Sins, yet they are not all *equal* Sins. There are no doubt *Degrees* of Guilt; but then indeed we must consider on the other hand, that in the *least* it is *Guilt* still. To answer those different Measures of *Transgression* there are different Measures of *Punishment*; but then it must be remember'd, that the least Degree of *eternal* Misery is insupportable. Our Wisdom therefore is rather to avoid *all* Sins in general, than to amuse ourselves with the various *Distinctions* between them. Which leads to my *Second* General Head, under which I proposed to shew,

II. THAT in a *practical* and *moral* Sense no Duties or Sins, all Things considered, can be *little*; and that it is necessary to have a strict

\* Eph. v. 4.



SERM. strict Regard even to those which seem the

XI. least important of *both*. I say in a *practical* and *moral* Sense: Because it is not denied but that these, as well as all other Things, may in their *abstracted* Natures be *comparatively* small; for, as I said above, Virtues and Vices are not *equal*. But then if we regard them upon the *whole*, as they tend to *promote* or *binder* our *Happiness*, none of them can be accounted *little*, i. e. *inconsiderable*, so as to deserve to be *slighted* or *overlook'd* by us: Which is what we mean by *little* in a *practical* or *moral* Sense. And the Truth of the Assertion laid down will appear from the distinct Consideration of these *three* following Particulars.

1. THAT the *least* Duties are *in themselves* necessary to be performed, and the *least* Sins to be avoided.

2. THAT *small* Things, both in Duty and Transgression, *tend* to *great* ones.

3. THAT though, *upon the whole*, *great* Crimes are more *dangerous* than *small*, yet in *some particular Instances* and *Regards* the *latter* may be *more so* than the *former*.

1. First then, the *least* Duties are *in themselves* necessary to be performed, and the *least*

least Sins to be avoided, because our Obedi- SERM.  
ence must be *universal*, and no Duty can XI.  
*supersede* the Obligation of *another*, be the  
Sizes or Degrees of them what they will.

\* *Then shall I not be confounded*, says the  
Psalmist, *when I have respect unto all thy*  
*Commandments*: And St. James † assures us  
that *whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and*  
*yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all*.  
Because the Authority of the Legislator is  
as truly struck at by the Violation of *one*  
*Part* as of the *Whole*. He that indulges  
himself in *one Vice*, would do so in the  
*rest*, if he had the same Temptation; and  
that he does not is owing only to his Con-  
stitution, Temper, and other Circum-  
stances, which incline him to *one* or more  
Sins, and not to *all*: For as to the Autho-  
rity of *God*, that he effectually sets aside by  
being wicked, though but in *one single Ha-*  
*bit*. If such a Person were asked, what it  
is that hinders him from committing any  
one Sin, and he should answer, that he ab-  
stains from it because *God* has forbidden it,  
might he not be reasonably asked, does not  
the *same God* as much forbid such *another*

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Sin?

\* Psalm cxix. 6.

† James ii. 10.

SERM. Sin? How then can he who pretends to be

XI. swayed by the Divine Authority allow himself in *this* any more than in the *former*? This is St. *James's* own Reasoning in the same Chapter: *For he that said, Do not commit Adultery; said also, Do not kill: Now if thou commit no Adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a Transgressor of the Law\**.

To come closer then to the present Case (from which yet we have not properly digressed) *all* Duties are necessary, therefore *small* ones. Here is no Distinction made about the *Dimensions* of them. As for the *Popish* Doctrine about Sins *Mortal* and *Venial*, we have often proved it to be false and impious; though the Use which that degenerate Church has made of it is abundantly evident. All Sins are in their Nature *mortal*, by which (as we are all along to observe) it is not to be understood that every Error or Imperfection, no nor very many of them, are unpardonable; so far otherwise, that for those a general Repentance will be sufficient: But only wilful, habitual, unrepented Sins are so, though never so *little* in their own Nature. *Single*  
Acts,

\* James ii. 11.

Acts, nay *very many* of them, will be for-  
 given, even in those Sins which are of a  
 high and heinous Nature, provided they are  
 repented of and reformed, much more in  
 the lower and less important Instances:  
 Only no Sin is *so* small, but that the known  
 unrepented Habit of it is *mortal*; and the  
 Performance of no one Duty, though never  
 so *great*, can evacuate the Obligation of  
 another, though never so *little*.

THAT known Maxim, *Every Greater contains in it the Less*, cannot take place here:  
 It holds true, indeed, concerning the different Degrees of the same Quality, in which the Greater may be said either to *include* or *supersede* the Less, it matters not which, the *Thing* being the *same*, though the *Expressions* are so very *different*. But in *two* or *more distinct Qualities*, which have their *separate* Natures and Notions, there is no such Principle to be admitted, particularly not in the Instance now before us. A great Duty can in no Sense be said to *supersede* a less, so as to cancel or annul its Obligation, nor to *include*, *contain*, or *suppose* it, any otherwise than as all the Virtues *in general*, and some more especially *in particular*, may



SERM. be said to be *connected among themselves* :

XI. Which is so far from proving against what has been discoursed, that it is a direct Confirmation of it : For according to this, *all* the Duties, *great* and *small*, must conspire and fall in with one another ; and this is the very Thing for which I am now contending. And indeed that Maxim concerning the *mutual Union* of the Virtues, however it has been exploded (because ill understood) as an empty *Scholastick* Subtilty, is (if it be rightly stated) a certain and most important Truth, founded upon the Principles of common Reason. For not to mention the more close Confederacy or Combination which there is between some particular Virtues, by reason of the Affinity of their Natures, as between *Humility* and *Contentment*, *Courage* and *Constancy*, and the like ; there is one *common Notion* in which they all agree : I mean the *sincere, ingenuous, universal Principle of Virtue in general*, involving the due Reverence paid to the *Authority of the Legislator*, and the *entire Love of God and Goodness*. Whosoever is upon this Foundation really virtuous in one Instance, is so in all : If he be virtuous *upon* this Principle, he *has*  
this

this Principle; and if he has, it will asSERM.  
surely influence all the Parts of his Duty, XI.  
as the Soul actuates and enlivens all the  
Parts of the Body. But what makes this  
Doctrine so difficult to be entertained, is  
the Fallacy of Men's seeming to be good in  
some Instances without really being so:  
They may do some Actions outwardly vir-  
tuous, and yet not be truly virtuous in  
any.

CHRISTIAN Obedience then ought to be  
like the *Christian Religion*, entire, uniform,  
harmonious, beautiful in its Symmetry, the  
Parts answering to each other, and the small,  
as well as great, performing their several  
Functions. Without this we can never be  
truly virtuous. We may as well expect to  
be in Health, when only our Heads and  
Limbs are sound, and the unseen Vessels  
distempered; or to have a curious Machine  
go regular and exact, when none but the  
larger Wheels and Springs are in due Mo-  
tion, the finer and more delicate ones being  
broken or out of Order.

THUS then it appears that the *smallest*  
Duties are *in themselves necessary*, therefore

SERM. cannot be *little* in a *practical* or *moral* Sense,

XI. *i. e. inconsiderable*. As they cannot be,



2. BECAUSE the *smallest* Things *tend* to the *greatest*. That they are *necessary* in *themselves* we have seen in the *foregoing* Particular. We are now considering the *Relation* they have to *others*. *He that contemneth small Things* (as the wise \* *Son of Sirach* observes) *shall fall by little and little*. As the Things he contemns are *small*, so will be the Degrees by which his Ruin approaches: But it will be *Ruin* still, and *that* can never be *little*. This *Aphorism* indeed is not wholly confined to *Religious* Matters: The *small Things* here spoken of may not be *Virtues* and *Vices* only, but also *Circumstances* to be observed by *human Prudence* in respect of *temporal* Interest and *civil* Life, in *Policy*, *Oeconomy*, or common *Conversation*. But it is as much so in *Morality* as in any other. How often has a vain Thought been blown up into the widest Extravagance! and one *rash Word* been the Cause of a thousand deliberately *wicked Actions*! What our *Saviour* therefore upon another

\* Eccclus. xix. 1.

ther Occasion said with regard to *Persons* SERM.  
may be applied in general both to *Persons* XI.  
and *Things*, both to Duties and Transgressions: *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones* \*. It would be endless, as well as superfluous, to instance in Particulars; and the Case being so plain, I shall add no more upon it, but observe in the *third Place*,

3. THAT though upon the whole great Crimes are more dangerous than small ones, yet in some particular Instances and Regards the latter may be more so than the former. Great Crimes are more pernicious when committed, but small ones are more likely to be committed. None but very wicked Persons can be frequently guilty of the former, but those who are religiously disposed may often fall into the latter. Even small Faults therefore are to be carefully avoided; nay, they may to some be the more dangerous for being small, and their very *Littleness* may make them fatal. Crimes of a bigger Size would alarm us at the first Assault, and our Spirits would recoil at the very Mention of them;

S 4

when

\* Matth. xviii. 10.



SERM. when these other being overlook'd, and un-  
 XI. regarded, insensibly slide upon us: They  
 are committed with little or no Reluctancy;  
 and *Shame*, that great Guardian of Inno-  
 cence, is not awaken'd by them: Such is  
*the Deceitfulness of Sin*, and the Inadver-  
 tency of our frail and depraved Nature.

I PROCEED now, in the *Third* and *Last*  
 Place,

III. To offer some farther *Considerations*,  
 which may prevail with us to avoid even  
 the *smallest* Sins, and make our Obedience  
*entire* and *complete*. This indeed, after what  
 has been said, may appear to be a super-  
 fluous Task; and since the *Necessity* of these  
 Points has been urged, That may seem to  
 supersede all *other* Reflections: But it must  
 be remember'd, that the *Subject* we are upon  
 is not to be negligent of *small Things*; and  
 some Persons may by *these* be led to con-  
 sider those which are more *important*. To  
 proceed therefore. In *other* Cases it is  
 esteem'd an *Accomplishment* to be *accurate*  
 and *exact*: Why should it not be so in *Re-*  
*ligion*? Is it that because this is a Matter of  
 the

the highest *Consequence*, therefore it requires SERM.  
the less *Exactness*? It is in Living, as in XI.  
every thing else; to be *correct* is to be *ele-*  
*gant*: Why, among other Circumstances,  
should we not be *elegantly virtuous*? And it  
must be remark'd, that *Elegancy* ever con-  
sists in *small Things*; and what is most *un-*  
*observed* is most *delicate*. If we should not  
*tensoriously* take notice of a \* *Mote in our*  
*Brother's Eye*, yet we can never too *curi-*  
*ously* observe one in *our own*. And as *Con-*  
*science* is like the *Eye* in respect of *Discern-*  
*ment*, we should labour to make it so too  
in respect of *Sensation*; to be exquisitely im-  
patient of Pain, to smart at the *lightest* Im-  
pression, that by its perpetual *Working* and  
*Motion* it may discharge the smallest *Grain*  
*of Sand* that was pungent and uneasy. This  
is indeed a *tender Conscience*, in the true,  
proper, and religious Sense. Let us labour  
therefore, as I said, to be *accurate* in Reli-  
gion; and we may be so if we please, by  
the *Grace of God* assisting us; which will  
never be wanting to us, if we be not want-  
ing to ourselves. Let us labour to be, as  
St.

\* Matth. vii. 3.

SERM. St. James expresses it, \* *perfect and entire,*

XI. *and wanting nothing*; i. e. to be habitual in the Practice of *all Virtues*, as we have Power and Opportunity, and of *no one Sin* whatsoever. For though our Obedience cannot be, strictly speaking, *perfect in Degree*, but the Merits of *Christ*, after all, must supply its Defects; yet it may, and ought to be *entire in all its Parts*: And if *absolute* unfinishing *Perfection* be not required of us, *Sincerity* most certainly is.

AND here I cannot but take notice, that though the Distinction between *Perfection* and *Sincerity* is frequently made, yet it is by no means so well understood as it ought to be; and that by reason of a very dangerous Mistake in the Notion of *Sincerity*, which is commonly supposed to imply much less than it really does. Men are apt to flatter themselves that they are *sincere*, if they are not *Hypocrites*, vulgarly so called; if they do not prevaricate and dissemble with others, and have some hearty Wishes to Religion. But they are to consider that *Sincerity* is opposed not only to *Diffimulation*, but to a  
*partial*

\* James i. 4.

*partial Obedience*; or more properly *the latter involves the former*: For if they habitually transgress but *one* Duty, they cannot be truly sincere in *any*, for want of that *universal* ingenuous Principle; and so they dissemble with their own Souls, and are Hypocrites to *themselves*, whatever they may be to others. Besides, *Sincerity*, according to the original Signification of the Word in all Authors, and that particularly which is affixed to it in the Holy Scriptures, implies *Integrity*, which, by the way, is itself *another Word* very much *misunderstood*: *Integrity*, or *Soundness*, as when it is applied to a *Body* which is *entire* in all its constituent Limbs, Nerves, and the like; or to a *Vessel* which has no *Crevice* or *Flaw* in any Part of it. *Simplicity* or *Singleness* is likewise signified by it, as it is opposed to *Mixture*. Thus the Apostle, \* *In Simplicity and godly Sincerity, we have had our Conversation in the World*. Our Virtue then, to be *sincere*, must have no Mixture of Vice; of no known, wilful, and accustomed Sin, though in itself it be never so *small*,  
and

\* 2 Cor. i. 12.



SERM. and seemingly *inconsiderable*. The least ill

XI. Humour in the Blood and Vitals of our  
 ~~~~~ Religion taints the whole Mass: † *Know ye not* (says the same Apostle) *that a little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump? Purge off therefore the old Leaven — and keep the Feast with the unleaven'd Bread of Sincerity and Truth.*

NOR does the strict Observation of the *most inferior* Duties and Transgressions make Religion so difficult and perplexing a Task; as some may from what has been said be apt to imagine. So far from it, that (how strange soever it may sound at first Hearing) a complete Obedience is more easy than a partial one; and it is less Trouble to be *entirely*, than *almost a Christian*. Were the Duties indeed so numerous, confused, and independent of one another, as to cause a Hurry and Distraction of Thought, or to entangle or over-burthen our Memories, there might then be some room for such an Objection. But since the Case is quite otherwise, since the Virtues and Vices are ranged under their distinct Heads, plain and
 easy

† 1 Cor. v. 6. 7.

easy both to be apprehended and remem-
bered ; since Conscience and common Reason are always so ready to admonish and inform us, that we cannot, without some Force upon ourselves, reject their Instructions ; since the Virtues, great and small, naturally assist each other, and to cleanse our Consciences from all the Relicks of Guilt contributes as much to the Health of the Soul, as to discharge the Dregs and Remains of a Distemper does to that of the Body : It follows that there is nothing but Comfort, and Peace, and Joy, in an *entire* Obedience ; and nothing but perpetual Struggle, Vexation, and Inquietude in a *maimed* or *incomplete* one. The Virtues being united will mutually facilitate the Practice of each other : Whatever Impression is made on any *Part*, the *Whole Chain* so exquisitely wrought will be *affected* and *tremble throughout* at the *smallest Touch* offer'd to the *smallest Link* of it.

ABOVE all Things therefore let us fix in our Hearts that important Principle of Virtue in general, I before mentioned, upon which the whole *Stress* and *Weight* of our Obedience

SERM. Obedience must ever turn. This passes
 XI. through the very *Center* of it : Upon this,
 as the *Globe* upon its *Axis*, the whole
Sphere of Duty is to roll ; and all the *Circles*
great and little, will be carried round in
 the *same Time*, and by the *same common*
Motion. Thus will our Religion be *uni-*
form, our Way *plain* and *smooth* before us,
 and we shall perceive to our inexpressible
 Comfort that the true Way to acquire the
 most *real Good* is to * *abstain from all Ap-*
pearance of Evil.

Now to God, &c.

* 1 Theſſ. v. 22.



SERMON

SERMON XII.

St. *Paul's* Strait betwixt
Two.

PHIL. I. 23, 24.

*For I am in a Strait betwixt Two;
having a Desire to depart, and to
be with Christ, which is far better.*

*Nevertheless to abide in the Flesh is
more needful for you.*

ST. *Paul*, when he wrote this his SERM.
Epistle to the *Philippians*, was a Pri- XII.
soner at *Rome* for the Faith of *Christ*,
under the Emperor *Nero*, and did not
know, *humanly* speaking, how soon his
Death might be the Consequence of that
Imprison-

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SERM. Imprisonment. It was therefore natural

XII. that his Thoughts should be much employ'd upon both those Subjects, and accordingly they were so; especially upon one of them, his *Dissolution*, leaving the World, and going to *Christ*. He several times, as at *ver. 7, 13, 16*, speaks of his *Bonds*. And *ver. 19*, and following: *For I know that this* (of which he was before speaking) *shall turn to my Salvation thro' your Prayer, and the Supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. According to my earnest Expectation and my Hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed; but that with all Boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my Body, whether it be by Life or by Death. For to me to live is Christ, (i. e. the Service of Christ) and to die is Gain. For if I live in the Flesh, this is the Fruit of my Labour; (or rather it should be render'd, it is worth my Labour) yet what I shall chuse I wot not. For I am in a Strait betwixt two; having a Desire to depart, (or, as it may be render'd, to be dissolved) and to be with Christ, which is far better: (better, i. e. for myself and my own Interest) Nevertheless to abide (i. e. for me to abide) in the Flesh is more needful for you:*

The

The Benefit being great which they must SERM.
needs reap from his Ministry. The XII.
Text thus opened, naturally yields us the
following Observations.

I. *First*, THAT the Souls of Christ's faithful and obedient Servants, upon their Departure from their Bodies, are immediately *with Christ*.

II. *Secondly*, THAT notwithstanding the natural *Love of Life*, and *Dread of Death*, they are upon that View and Prospect of *being with Christ*, for their own sakes, willing and desirous to *die*.

III. *Thirdly*, THAT however, for the sake of *others*, to whom their longer Continuance in this World is like to be of great Benefit, they are willing and desirous to *live*.

IV. *Fourthly*, THAT from these contrary desires their arises a pious *Conflict* or *Struggle* in their Breasts: They are in a *Strait betwixt Two*. I shall speak to each of these severally in their *Order*; and then,

V. *Fifthly and Lastly*, MAKE some *practical Reflections* upon what shall have been discoursed.

SERM^o

XII

I. FIRST then, the *Souls of Christ's faithful, &c.* To be *with Christ* implies, in the general, to be in a *State of Happiness*; more particularly, to be in some measure beatified by the Enjoyment of his personal Presence. I say *in some measure*, because the Souls of the Righteous shall not come to the Fulness of their Happiness in *the main*, nor to the Enjoyment of *Christ's* personal Presence in *particular*, till after the Resurrection. Then, and to all Eternity, they will be in the highest Heavens, in * *the third Heaven*, as St. Paul speaks, where they will see God † *Face to Face*, and be consummately happy in the *Beatific Vision* of him. In the mean time, that is between their Departure from their Bodies and the Resurrection, they will be in the Place or State, or both, called in Scripture *Paradise*, which, though not the Consummation of Bliss, is yet beyond our Imagination blissful and glorious; even this being a Happiness, ‡ which *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, and which hath not enter'd into the Heart of Man*. And this Happiness (as I said)

* 2 Cor. xii. 2.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

said) shall commence *immediately* upon the SERM.
Soul's Departure from the Body. For if it XII.
be true *in the general* that the Soul, during
its Separation from the Body, does not *sleep*,
or is not in a State of *Insensibility*, as learned
Men (the excellent Bishop * *Bull* especially)
have proved both from Reason and Scrip-
ture (for the further Confutation of which
unphilosophical, as well as *unscriptural* Con-
ceit, I will now add something by way of
Supplement to what they have alledg'd) it
must follow from the same Arguments that
it cannot, in the separate State, sleep or be
insensible *at all*; no not for an Hour or a
Minute. If it could be *at all* insensible in
that State, it might as well be so during the
whole Time of its Separation, during the
whole Interval between Death and the Re-
surrection. If therefore it be not *at all* in
a State of *Insensibility* during the Separa-
tion, it follows that *immediately* upon the
Separation it must be in a State of Percep-
tion, and that again must be either of Hap-
piness or Misery. *Crellius*, who in the
gross asserted this Indolence or *Insensibility*
of the separated Soul, is absurd enough,

T 2. when

* Vol. I. Serm. II. III.

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SERM. when he says upon this very Text, *Because*

XII. *the Time betwixt Death and the Resurrection*
is not to be reckoned; meaning, I suppose, as
the Time which now passes in our *Sleep* goes
for nothing in the Account of Life: *There-*
fore the Apostle might speak thus, though the
Soul hath no Sense of any thing after Death;
meaning again, I suppose, (for he expresses
himself somewhat darkly) that though the
Soul hath no such Sense in the Interval be-
twixt Death and the Resurrection, *St. Paul*
might reckon his *being with Christ* presently
upon his *Death*, because all that interme-
diate Space goes for nothing, the Soul not
perceiving it, nor being in the least con-
scious of it. To which *Dr. Whitby* answers:
“ But could *St. Paul* think a State of In-
“ sensibility *much better* than a Life tend-
“ ing, so much as his did, to the Glory of
“ God, to the Propagation of the Gospel,
“ and the Furtherance of the Joy of Chri-
“ stians? No, doubtless; he could not.
“ So far otherwise, that he was willing to
“ suspend and defer the Happiness of
“ Paradise itself for the Glory of God, and
“ the Benefit of Mankind.” But the learn-
ed Author forgets that the *Apostle* in this
Verse

Verse is speaking of *his own* Interest, even SERM.
as contradistinguished to that of others. XII.

The Author adds, " Could he call such an
" *insensate State a being with Christ, &c?*
No certainly; nor does *Crellius* say he could,
plainly supposing that he was not *to be with*
Christ till after the Resurrection. The true
Answer therefore I take to be this: What
Crellius says may hold indeed as to bare *Free-*
dom from Pain, but not as to the *Sense* or
Perception of Pleasure; and sure the Enjoy-
ment of *Christ* is such. Could the *Apostle*
say that it is as good to *be with Christ* a
thousand or ten thousand Years hence, as
to be with him to-morrow, or this Hour,
or this Minute? The sooner the better, one
would think, because whatever Delay there
be, there is so much Happiness lost in the
mean time. Besides, if between Death and
the Resurrection the Soul be *asleep* or
insensible, why should the *Apostle* *desire to*
depart? Or how would he *be with Christ* by
such *departing*? According to this Notion,
he was more with *Christ* in *this* World, than
he could be in the *next*, till after the Re-
surrection; and consequently the longer Life
the better. But he of all Men living well

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SERM. knew what he said, when he spoke upon
 XII. this Subject. He had *been* in *Paradise*, the
 ~~~~~ Place or State of blessed Spirits departed  
 this Life, as well as in the *third Heaven*,  
 the Place of perfect Glory and Happiness,  
 the more immediate and especial Residence  
 of *God* himself. And did he find this *Para-*  
*dise* a Cave of *Sleep* and *Insensibility*? Not  
 so, but a Mansion of inconceivable *Bliss*  
 and *Glory*; which is plainly enough inti-  
 mated, he \* *heard* there *unspeakable Words*,  
*which it is not lawful* (it should rather be  
 rendered *possible*) *for Man to utter*. He  
 moreover tells us that when he was thus  
 wrapt up, † *he did not know whether he was*  
*in the Body or out of it*. If so, the Soul can  
 be sensible of Pleasure when *separated* from  
 the Body: Otherwise he could have made  
 no Question of that matter; he must have  
 been *in* the Body, because he could have  
 had no Perception *without* it. But to wave  
 other Considerations, that of our *blessed Sa-*  
*viour* himself to the penitent Thief upon  
 the Cross determines this whole Matter, and  
 puts it beyond all Question. ‡ *To Day*  
*shalt thou be with me in Paradise*. Which  
 proves

\* 2 Cor. xii. 4.    † Ver. 3.    ‡ Luke xxiii. 43.

proves not only that the Soul has the Per-  
ception of Happiness when *separated* from  
the Body, but also that it *commences imme-* SERM.  
XII.

*diately* upon that Separation. And, by the  
Rule of Contraries, the *Wicked*, on their  
Dissolution, go into a State of *Misery*, and  
that too *immediately*. Both which (were  
there Occasion to add any more in so plain  
a Case) are proved from that of our Saviour  
in the Parable of the *rich Man* and *Lazarus*.

\* *And it came to pass that the Beggar died,  
and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's  
Bosom: The rich Man also died, and was  
buried; and in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being  
in Torments. The one died, and was carried  
to Abraham's Bosom, which sure does not  
imply a State of Sleep and Insensibility: The  
other died, and lift up his Eyes in Hell.  
Does this intimate any Space of Time be-  
tween Death and the Sense of Happiness  
or Misery? Does not the Way and Man-  
ner of Expressing evidently imply the con-  
trary? Let any reasonable Person judge.  
If it be alledged by way of Objection, that  
the Dead in very many Places both of the  
Old and New Testament are said to sleep:*

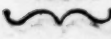
T 4

I an-

\* Luke xvii. 22, 23.



SERM. I answer, If we can accommodate and re-

XII.  concile this with what has been proved, that is sufficient: And we say it relates to the *Body*, not to the *Soul*; there being a great Resemblance between a *sleeping* Body and a *dead* one, upon which Account *Sleep* is commonly call'd the *Image of Death*. And that it is thus to be understood, is plain from that of *Dan. xii. 2. And many of them that sleep in the Dust shall awake.* The *Body*, we know, is buried in the *Dust*; but that the *Soul* is, no one, I suppose, will affirm. It may be objected *secondly*, Since the *Soul* sleeps when the *Body* does, while we are *living*, why may it not after we are *dead*? I answer, 1. Because we have prov'd from *Scripture* that it does *not*. 2. Suppose it *did* so sleep while we are living, 'tis no Consequence, even in Reason, that therefore it does after its Separation from the *Body*. 'Tis impossible we should argue conclusively from the one to the other, unless we were better acquainted with the *Nature* of our *Souls*, and of our *Bodies* too, than we are at present. 3. I deny the *Supposition*: The *Soul* *does* think when we sleep, though confusedly and irregularly, as appears

appears from the Instance of *Dreams*. For SERM.  
 which Confusion and Irregularity we can- XII.  
 not account, because we know not the full  
*Nature* either of *Soul* or *Body*, nor the  
*Manner* of their *Union*; nor how they are  
*active* upon, and *passive* from, *each other*.  
 It is therefore with too much Confidence  
 asserted by some late Philosophers, that *the*  
*Soul thinks not always*; and the Arguments  
 they alledge are no better than Arguments  
*ad Ignorantiam*, pressing those who are of  
 the contrary Opinion with Difficulties  
 which very likely they cannot solve: But  
 this, it is well known, is no conclusive  
 Way of Reasoning: 'Tis one thing to puz-  
 zle an *Adversary's* Cause, and quite another  
 to make good *one's own*. The main Point  
 they go upon is, I think, a mere *gratis*  
*dictum*, or an Assertion without Proof, viz.  
 that *Thinking* in the *Soul* exactly answers to  
*Motion* in the *Body*; and as *Body* has always  
 indeed a *Capacity* of Motion, but does not  
 always *actually* move, so the *Soul* has always  
 a *Capacity* of Thinking, but does not always  
*actually* think. I should imagine that *Think-*  
*ing* in the *Soul* should rather answer *Exten-*  
*son* in the *Body*, than *Motion*; and as the

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SERM. *one* has always actual *Extension*, so the other  
 XII. has always actual *Thinking*: Otherwise it  
 will be hard to say what *actual, positive* Property or Quality it has: And to conceive an actual, positive *Being* or *Substance* with no actual, positive *Quality* or *Property* essential to it, but with a *Capacity* only, is to make it a strange, naked, negative Kind of Being, *i. e.* in effect no Being at all. But I lay little or no Stress upon this *Philosophizing*; we are in the dark about these Matters: I would only shew that 'tis *dignum patellâ operculum*, the *Answer* at least as good as the *Argument*, though there is no great Force in *either*. The best Use we can make of our Reason in these Cases, is to reason from *Scripture*: And from thence, I conceive, I have sufficiently made out the Point I undertook to prove. Which being done, I proceed now to my *Second Observation*:

II. THAT notwithstanding the natural Love of *Life*, and Dread of *Death*, the faithful Servants of *Christ* are, upon the View and Prospect of *being with him*, for their own *sakes* willing and desirous to *die*. That this Proposition is to be taken with *Limitations* and

and *Restrictions*, and *what* those Limita-SERM.  
tions and Restrictions *are*, will appear in XII.  
due Place. In the Proposition itself here is

something *supposed*, and something *asserted*.  
It is *supposed* that there is a natural *Love* of  
*Life*, and *Dread* of *Death*, even in the *best*  
of *Christians*. It is *asserted* that they over-  
rule and conquer this *Love* of the *one*, and  
*Dread* of the *other*, by their earnest Desire  
of *being with Christ*. As to the *former*,  
when we say the *Best of Christians*, it is  
probable indeed that such an eminent and  
illustrious Person as *St. Paul* must be ex-  
cepted. He, and such as he, who were  
blest'd and honour'd with heavenly Visions,  
and immediate Inspiration from God him-  
self, may well be conceived to have had  
the animal *Love* of *Life*, and *Aversion*  
from *Death*, quite stifled and extinguished  
within them. But excepting such extraor-  
dinary Cases, *Life* is naturally sweet, and is  
so averse from *Death*, that holy Persons,  
even of the first Rank in Holiness, are rare-  
ly, if ever, wholly free from these Impres-  
sions. But then, *2dly*, (which was the  
Thing *asserted*) These Impressions may be,  
and are, over-ruled and conquered by their  
earnest



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SERM. earnest Desire of *being with Christ*. Here  
 XII. again we do not say that *all* good Men, even  
 the *best*, since the Days of Inspiration, are  
 like *St. Paul*, and such as he, in this Re-  
 spect, *St. Paul* especially. For besides his  
 heroic Virtue, and Piety, and divine Revel-  
 ations, he had *been in Paradise*, as I before  
 observed upon *another* Occasion: And there-  
 fore he must have had the most earnest De-  
 sire, Longing and Panting, to be *again* in  
 the same blessed Place or State, there to  
 continue till the final Consummation of all  
 Things, and then be advanced to the *high-  
 est Heavens*, the beatific Presence of God  
 himself; to a short transient View of which  
 he had likewise the Honour and Happiness  
 of being admitted. But *other* good Men  
 have, though not *so* great a Desire of *de-  
 parting, and being with Christ*, yet a very  
 great one; enough to conquer the natural  
*Love of Life* and *Fear of Death*. To pass  
 over the Examples of the *Blessed Martyrs*,  
 who triumph'd in the midst of Flames and  
 Tortures, we have Instances of pious Chri-  
 stians expressing upon their Death-beds an  
 earnest Desire of being *dissolved* that they  
 may *be with Christ*, and the greatest Joy  
 that

that they are now so near it. But here SERM.  
XII.  
again we must obviate a great and dangerous Mistake. One may be a good Christian, and go to Heaven, without any of these ardent Longings, and, as it were, sensible Joys; nay without at all *desiring* to *die*, nay with a *Desire* to *live*: Because, though he be a good Christian, he may fear he is *not* so, at least not good *enough*: He may think himself *not* fit for Heaven, when he really *is*. So that a Man may die full of *Doubt*, and yet *die the Death of the Righteous*\*: Because this Doubt and Fear in him proceeds from a good Principle; not from Want of Faith or Trust in God, but from a modest and humble Diffidence in *himself*; from a deep Sense of his being a sinful Creature on the *one* hand, of God's infinite Purity and Holiness on the *other*. The Proposition of this Head therefore is to be understood only with relation to Men of the *upper* Class in Holiness; and even of *them* it may not be *universally* true: *Some* even of the *best* Christians may by reason of Melancholy, or other accidental Circumstances of Infirmary, have no such Sentiments as those  
of

\* Numb. xxiii. 10.

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SERM. of which we have been speaking. And  
 XII. though some, as we have seen, notwithstanding the natural and merely animal Love of Life and Dread of Death, are, upon the View and Prospect of *being with Christ*, for their own sakes, willing and desirous to die; yet,

III. FOR the sake of *Others*, to whom their longer Continuance in this World is like to be of great Benefit, they are willing and desirous to *live*: Which was our *Third* Observation from the *Text*. The *Apostle* indeed does not in this Place *expressly* say that he is desirous to live longer for the sake of those to whom he writes; but he plainly enough implies it in the Words immediately following. *And having this Confidence*, (*i. e.* says a learned Expofitor, that you will receive this Advantage by my abiding in the Flesh)—*Confidence* implies *Hope*, and something more; and *Hope* implies *Desire*. The *Apostle* goes on: *I know that I shall abide, and continue with you all, for your Furtherance and Joy of Faith: That your Rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ, by my coming to you again.* He says he *knows* he shall,

shall, *i. e.* by Revelation from God. And SERM.  
 accordingly he *was* deliver'd from this first XII.  
 Imprisonment under *Nero*; and suffer'd not,  
 or rather enjoy'd not, Martyrdom, till af-  
 ter he was a second time imprison'd by that  
 Emperor. During which Imprisonment he  
 thus writes to *Timothy*: \* *I am now ready to*  
*be offered, and the Time of my Departure is*  
*at hand.* But *here* he says he shall *not* die;  
 and the whole Tenor of his Words shews  
 that he says it *with Pleasure*, for the sake  
 of those to whom he minister'd, though not  
 for his own. And the same may be said  
 of, at least, all *eminently* good and pious  
 Christians: Otherwise they would *not* be  
 so good as they *are*, according to the Sup-  
 position. As a pious Christian will, in one  
 View, endure to *die* for his Friends, Relations,  
 those committed to his Charge, or for Man-  
 kind in general; so in another View he will  
 endure to *live* for them: According as the  
*former* or the *latter* shall be more for their  
 Advantage. Even their *temporal* Benefit  
 will weigh much with him; so much that  
 he will upon the account of their tempo-  
 ral Benefit chuse to defer his own eternal  
 Happiness.



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SERM. Happiness. But much stronger is the Argument with respect to *spiritual Advantages*. Thus Parents *truly Christian* will desire to postpone the Happiness of Heaven itself, that they may live to make their Children *such*; to *bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, as our great *Apostle* \* elsewhere speaks. But that we may have a more immediate View to *him* and his *Successors*, more or less, in spiritual Offices; this is chiefly and most especially the Case of *Christ's faithful Ministers* in all Ages. They, though never so sure of Heaven, will willingly and gladly defer their Enjoyment of it, that under God, and by his Grace, and his Blessing upon their Labours, they may bring *others* thither, as well as be brought thither *themselves*.

IV. FROM these contrary Desires there arises a pious *Conflict* or *Struggle* in their Breasts; they are *in a Strait betwixt two*. I say a *pious Struggle*, for it is so on both Sides. On the *one* hand, none but a devout and heavenly Soul can long to leave its Body, and *be with Christ*. On the *other* hand,  
it

\* Eph. vi. 4.

it is a high Degree of Piety, and argues a SERM.  
 Spirit truly *Christian*, to be willing and de- XII.  
 sirous to suspend the Happiness of the *next*  
 World, for the sake of doing good in *this*.  
 And as this *Conflict* is a *holy* and *religious*, so  
 'tis a *pleasant* and *delightful* one: 'Tis a  
*Strait* which a *wise* Man would *wish* to be  
 in, as well as a *Strait* which none but a  
*good* Man can be in. It is not like the Strug-  
 gle between *Flesh* and *Spirit*, *Vice* and *Vir-*  
*tue*; which is always irksome and painful:  
 But it is between *Spiritual* and *Spiritual*, be-  
 tween *one* Virtue and *another* Virtue; which  
 is accompanied with \* *Joy unspeakable, and*  
*full of Glory*. Much less is it like the Con-  
 flict betwixt two or more *Vices*; which is  
 all over *Torment*, as vicious Men can abun-  
 dantly testify. We need add no more upon  
*this* Head; and so I pass on, in the *Fifth*  
 and *Last* Place,

V. To make some *practical Improvements*  
 of what has been discoursed.

1<sup>st</sup> THEN, What has been discoursed  
 may administer to all *good Christians* strong  
 Consolation, and a sovereign Remedy against

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the

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SERM. the natural *Fear of Death.* *Natural, I*  
 XII. mean, as it is rooted in their *lower* Facul-  
 ties: For their *Reason* does not fear Death,  
 though their *sensitive* and *animal* Part does.  
 And against this *natural* Dread and Re-  
 luctancy, I say, serious and devout *Medita-*  
*tion* upon this Subject will yield them a so-  
 vereign Remedy; so far, at least, as greatly  
 to *lessen* and *abate* it, if not entirely to *ex-*  
*tinguish* and *suppress* it: Which *last* perhaps  
 is scarce possible. The *Wicked* indeed have  
 abundant Cause to be *afraid of dying*; their  
*Reason*, as well as *lower* Faculties, justly  
 trembles at the Apprehension of it. To  
*them* therefore, while they *continue* wicked,  
 we have no Comfort to administer. Have  
 we then *nothing* to say to them upon this  
 Article? Do we *abandon* them, without  
 Hope, to the Terrors under which they  
 labour? *God forbid*: We have something of  
 the utmost Moment to press upon them:  
 Which is, that they would break off their  
 Sins by *Repentance* and thorough *Reforma-*  
*tion*, and with the *Fear of God* conquer the  
*Fear of Death.* They are *then* in the Num-  
 ber of *good Christians*, to whom this strong  
 Consolation belongs: *These*, as appears from  
 what

what has been discoursed, have Cause rather to *desire* Death, than to be *afraid* of it. Should they then *wish* for Death? Not so neither; if by *wishing* it be meant an *over-earnest* Desire of it, joined with something of *Impatience* and *Discontent* with this our present State, and not humbly submitting to God's Disposal of us, nor leaving him to take his own Time: But we may and ought so far to desire Death, as to long for and pant after the Joys of *Heaven*, and gladly to die whenever it shall please our *Father, who is in Heaven*, to call us, They however, who, with regard to themselves, would not be there this very Minute, are never like to be there at all. Which I mention with a View to those who say they hope they shall go to Heaven when they die, and very much desire it, yet they are not *in haste* for it, this World being very agreeable and pleasant to them: So they are willing to enjoy the Happiness of *Earth* as long as possible, and then *Heaven* will be extremely welcome. The Men, I say, who talk at this rate, and would not (for their own sakes) *be with Christ* this very Minute, (for *that* Circumstance takes off even the



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SERM. *natural and animal Fear of Death*) are never like to be with him at all; because they  
 XII.  are plainly *Lovers* of the *World* more than of *him*; because they do not *hunger and thirst* after Heaven, as *all* Christians *should*, and all *good* Christians *actually do*. They must be not only ill-judging, but carnal and earthly-minded Creatures, who can even for an Hour, or a Minute, prefer the *greatest* Happiness of *this* World to the *least* of the *next*. What a wretched Choice is this?  
 \* *Quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido?* But still for the Benefit of *others* the good Christian desires to *live*, and continue longer in the *Flesh*.

2dly, SINCE the Soul upon its Departure from the Body is *immediately* in a State of Happiness or Misery; this, one would think, should give a full Answer to that *fatal Fallacy*, which is the Cause of so much Sin and Folly, and the everlasting Ruin, as it is to be feared, of so many Thousands, a *false Judgment* concerning *Present* and *Future*, as compared with each other. Since Things *present* so much affect us, why do we not consider, that upon our Death we are *presently*

sently in a State of Happiness or Misery, and S E R M.  
that too unchangeable, irreversibile, eternal? XII.  
Which cannot be said of any thing in *this* ~~~~~  
World, whose Pleasures and Pains are all of  
so very short a Duration. *Future* indeed it  
is, because *not* actually *present*: But it is a  
*very little way off*, *very near* being *present*.  
Suppose the Happiness and Misery to be at  
never so great a *Distance*, they are both *cer-*  
*tain* and *eternal*, and even in *that* View Sin  
is the greatest Madness imaginable. Were  
they Millions of Ages distant from us, our  
*Reason* was given us for nothing, if by the  
Force of *Thinking* we do not make Things  
*future* (since *as such* they are *certain*, and  
these of which we are speaking are *eternal*  
as well as *certain*) *appear* to us as if they  
were *present*. But I say, and we can scarce  
say it too *often*, the Case is quite *otherwise*.  
For are our Lives so *long*? We *may* die, and  
*consequently*, as we have seen, be finally  
happy or miserable, this *Hour*, this *Minute*;  
we certainly *must* in a very few *Years*. *Pre-*  
*sent* Things, it seems, make the deepest  
Impression upon us: Why, this final, un-  
changeable, irreversibile Happiness or Mi-  
sery are *as present* as any thing not *strictly*

SERM. so can well be: And how then come we

XII.

to be so wretchedly deluded by the Comparison betwixt *Present* and *Future*? Admitting we live as long as is given to any, which yet is by no means to be admitted, we must die *very soon* at best. And when we do, we are in an *Instant*, I say in an *Instant*, either in Bliss and Glory, in the same Place, or State, or both, with *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, with *Moses* and the *Prophets*, the glorious Company of the *Apostles*, the blessed *St. Paul*, the *Apostle* of my *Text* in particular, the noble Army of *Martyrs*, the blessed *Virgin Mother* of our *Lord*, and in some measure with our blessed *Lord himself*, already happy, though not perfectly; but with Joy unspeakable waiting for the happy Hour when we shall be made so: Or else we are *instantly*, I say again *instantly*, upon our Death, plunged into Torments, Plagues, Horrors, Despair unutterable, inconceivable, insupportable; into the Company of Devils, and damn'd Spirits, \* *reserved in everlasting Chains, under Darknefs, unto the Judgment of the great Day*. Upon this Prospect, can Sin appear in any Form but the

the most *frightful* and *detestable*? Has it any SERM.  
*Allurements*, any *Charms*, any thing to in- XII.  
*vite* and *entice* us? Do not the *Lusts of the*  
*Flesh*, the *Pride of Riches*, the *Glories of the*  
*World* shrink and vanish into *nothing*? But  
 alas! Men do not *consider* or do not *believe*  
 these Things, as they should do; and there  
 is the fatal Folly and Misfortune of all. Of  
 which more hereafter. Nothing separates  
 this World from the next, but a thin Par-  
 tition of frail brittle Flesh, which must be  
 soon broken down; so that in this Sense  
 also *in the midst of Life we are in Death*;  
 i. e. while we are in this Life we are so  
 near being in the other, that the Distance  
 is altogether inconsiderable. Say not, (that  
 we may apply a Passage both of the Old  
 and New Testament to a different Purpose  
 from that for which it was spoken) say not,  
*Who shall ascend into Heaven to bring down*  
*Heaven to thee?* Or *who shall descend into*  
*the Deep to bring Hell to thee?* For both  
 Heaven and Hell are *very nigh thee*.\* Were  
 they but visible to us, to see them would  
 be only like looking through a Lattice or  
 Window out of one Room of the same

U 4

House

\* Deut. xxx. 14. Rom. x. 6, 7, 8.



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SERM. House into another. Well then, it may be  
 XII. said, it seems they are *not* visible; and  
 ~~~~~ since they are not, how can it be expected  
 they should affect us as if they were? It is
 very true, *Invisible* as compared with *Visible*
 is another fatal Fallacy; like that of *Future*
 as compared with *Present*. But I now say
 of *this*, as I said before of *that*, if we do
 not answer this Fallacy by the Power of
Thinking, either our *Reason* was given us
 for nothing, or we are extremely criminal,
 and have a wretched Account to give, for
 making no Use of it in a Matter of so
 vast Importance. Which brings me to
 the *fourth* and *last* Improvement I would
 make of what has been discoursed, *viz.*

4. THAT we must habituate ourselves
 to *think* and *meditate* much, very much,
 upon this great and important Subject.
 These Things are *invisible*: What if they
 are? They are *certain* for all that, *infalli-*
bly certain, if the *Scriptures* be *true*; as we
 have often proved to a Demonstration that
 they are. But still *Thinking* and *Considera-*
tion must bring this Truth home to us, or
 we can never make any practical Use of it.

Remember

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*Remember this, and shew yourselves Men; i. e. SERM. think and act like *rational* Creatures. And XII. great is the *Pleasure* as well as *Profit* of these Meditations. With what a Gust and Relish upon his Soul must the blessed *Apostle* have written those Words: *For we know that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, a House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our House which is in Heaven* †. Nor is there any great *Depth* or *Abstraction* of *Thought* required for this Meditation. We need not be *Philosophers*; 'tis sufficient for it that we are *Men* and *Christians*. It is indeed required that we should be serious and contemplative, take Care of our Souls, and despise this wretched World, in Comparison of that which is to come. But there is no great *Reach* in all this, of *Knowledge* and *Understanding* I mean, though there is of *Piety* and *Religion*. The most *unlettered* Man or Woman is capable of it. A good *Disposition*, and the *Grace* of God (which is never wanting to us, if we be not wanting

* Isaiah xli. 8.

† 2 Cor. v. 1, 2.

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SERM.ing to ourselves) are abundantly sufficient
 XII. for this Purpose. Let it be remembered
 ~~~~~ too, that by thus *having our Conversation in  
 Heaven, we almost* (though not quite) cut  
 off all the Troubles and Molestations, to  
 which we are continually subject on Earth:  
*Looking not at the Things which are seen, but  
 at the Things which are not seen: For the  
 Things which are seen are temporal, but the  
 Things which are not seen are eternal \*.*

Now to God, &c.

\* 2 Cor. iv. 18.



SERMON

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## SERMON XIII.

### The Folly and Misery of Apostatizing from CHRISTIANITY.

The *First* Sermon on this Subject.

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JOHN VI. 66, 67, 68.

*From that Time many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

*Then said Jesus unto the Twelve, Will ye also go away?*

*Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life.*

**F**OR the right Understanding of this SERM. Passage, we must cast an Eye upon XIII. what goes before. Our Blessed Saviour, disputing with the Jews, had declared that

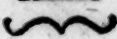


SERM. that he was the *Bread of Life*, and that the  
 XIII. Bread he meant was *his Flesh*. The Jews  
 therefore strove among themselves, saying, *How*  
*can this Man give us his Flesh to eat \*?* Then  
 Jesus said unto them, *Except ye eat of the*  
*Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood,*  
*ye have no Life in you †.* And so on, con-  
 tinuing the same Subject, till ver. 60. where  
 it follows: *Many therefore of his Disciples,*  
*when they heard this, said, This is an hard*  
*Saying, who can hear it?* These Disciples were  
 certain *Half-Converts*, who followed him  
 indeed, but not heartily; being not true  
 and thorough Disciples: For if they had  
 been, they would not have murmured at  
 him for so trivial a Circumstance as an Ex-  
 pression of his which they did not under-  
 stand, much less have deserted him and  
 apostatized from him, even after he had  
 explained himself, by informing them that  
 what he said was not to be taken in a *gross*  
*and literal*, but in a *spiritual and figurative*  
*Signification*. Notwithstanding which, *from*  
*that Time*, or (as it may very well be ren-  
 dered) *for that Reason*, viz. because of those  
 Words spoken by him, *many of his Dis-*  
*ciples*

\* Ver. 52.

† Ver. 53.

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*iples went back, &c. Then said Jesus to* SERM.  
*the Twelve, &c. Then Simon Peter answer'd,* XIII.  
*&c.* 

FROM the Text thus considered in Con-  
junction with the Context, I raise the Three  
following Observations, which seem natural-  
ly to result from it.

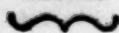
I. *First*, THAT those who have once  
given their Names to *Christ*, and pro-  
fessed themselves his Disciples, can  
have no good Cause to forsake him, or  
fall off from him; but whatever *Pre-  
tences* they alledge must be very weak  
and frivolous. From that Time, or ra-  
ther for that Reason, that very foolish  
one above-mentioned, *many of his Dis-  
ciples went back, and walked no more  
with him.*

II. *Secondly*, THAT the Defection or  
Apostasy of such Persons is no Argu-  
ment why *others* should follow them,  
or imitate their Example; but rather  
ought to make them more cautious  
and careful. *Will ye also go away?*

III. *Thirdly*, THAT no Man can desert  
*Christ* and his Religion, without being  
infinitely

SERM.

XIII.



infinitely a *Losers* by so doing; and every Person of true and unprejudiced Reason will be the more assured of the Truth of *Christianity*, the more deeply and thoroughly he considers it. *Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life.*

THIS *last* Head consists of *two* Branches, which, I am sensible, might themselves be made two *distinct* Heads of Discourse. But I rather chuse to join them together, and to consider the *Usefulness* or *Excellence*, and the *Truth* or *Certainty* of our Religion, *intermix'd* with each other. By which means I conceive they will Both be the more confirm'd and illustrated: As may perhaps appear from the *Sequel*.

I. FIRST then, Those who have *once* given their Names to *Christ*, and profess'd themselves his Disciples, can have no good Cause to desert him, or fall off from him; but whatever *Pretences* they alledge must be very *weak* and *frivolous*. *From that Time*, (or rather *for that Reason*, that very foolish Reason above-mentioned) *many of his Disciples went back, and walk'd no more with him.*

'Twas

"Twas *strange* and *unaccountable* to them, it SERM. seems, (and they did not at all *understand* it) XIII. that he should be *Bread*, and that they should *eat his Flesh*. Well, and what then? Was it absolutely necessary that they should understand every thing he said, at first Hearing? They had seen his Miracles, heard his divine Discourses; and were so far convinced, that they joined with him, followed him, and professed themselves his Disciples. And why do they now leave him? Why, because of the *hard Saying* before mention'd. This was the *Pretence*: Or if they really thought it a sufficient and rational Ground for their Defection, they argued most absurdly, and made a most unjustifiable Use of the Reason which God had given them. A *hard Saying* (supposing this to have been one) was no Argument for such a Defection, after they had uncontested outward Evidence that the Speaker *came from God*: By which they themselves were at first actually convinced, and did not now so much as pretend to disprove it. Besides, our *Saviour* had explain'd himself upon this Article, and yet they forsook him. But in all Probability the *given Reason* was not the

*real*



SERM. *real Reason.* Their Pride, their Lusts, and

XIII. *their other Vices and Corruptions, were the*

*true Causes of their Apostasy. They had indeed follow'd Christ, being overpower'd by his Miracles and holy Life; but upon further Consideration they could not bear the Thoughts of conforming themselves to the Purity of his Doctrine, nor of suffering Shame and Persecution in the Profession of it. And that this was in truth their Case, is intimated by our Lord himself, and his Evangelist remarking upon his Words:*

*\* But there are some of you that believe not. This is plainly said by way of Blame or Reproof; and therefore it must reflect upon the Perverseness of their Wills, as their Fault; not upon the Weakness of their Understandings, which could be only their Misfortune. As if he should have said, "I do not wonder that these Things are taken perversely by you, (so Grotius upon the Place) "because there are not a few among you "who do not believe me; and that because "of their Pride and Obstinacy." For Jesus knew from the Beginning (continues the Evangelist) who they were that believed not,*

*and*

and who should betray him. These Unbelievers, we see, are mention'd together with SERM. XIII.

Judas the Traitor; and that he was a wicked Man, and is here mention'd as such, nobody will question. \* *And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no Man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father:* Referring to what goes before, † *except the Father draw him, &c.* To draw any one, or give to him, or give him to Christ, (see ver. 37.) i. e. says the learned Grotius, so that he may thoroughly believe in Christ: Which is given to none but those who are pious, and modest, and desirous of Instruction. Or it may be taken thus, as it often is: Giving the Thing includes its being accepted by those to whom it is given. The same Grotius has these Words upon the Place: “*Jurisperiti notant sepe datum id intelligi, quod & acceptatum fit.*” Our Saviour then tells them, that Faith is the Gift of God; by which he is so far from excusing them, that his Design is to reproach them for rejecting it, when it was offer'd them. They had in them therefore ‡ *an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the*

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living

\* Ver. 65.

† Ver. 44.

‡ Heb. iii. 12.

SERM. *living God*: i. e. a corrupt vicious Heart inclining them to Unbelief; which was the *real Cause* of their Apostasy, though they made use of the silly Pretence here alledged for want of a better. *They went out from us*, says St. John \* upon a like Occasion, *but they were not of us*; (i. e. heartily and sincerely) *for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us*: And this without being govern'd by Prejudice, or giving up the Freedom of their Thinking; there being no manner of Reason for their quitting *Christianity*, but all the Reason in the World for their adhering to it; as we shall abundantly shew *hereafter*.

In like manner, the Unbelievers of *these Times* raise fundry Objections from *hard Sayings* in the *Scriptures*; Difficulties, unintelligible Passages, Inconsistencies, Contradictions, and so forth. Now I ask, Do they really *believe* that there is any Force in these Objections, or do they *not*? If they do *not*, the Thing answers itself, and we need say no more of it. If they *do*, they argue most absurdly and ridiculously, (as I said before of the Apostates in our *Saviour's* Time)

\* 1. Epist. iii. 19.

Time) and make a most perverse and un-SERM.  
justifiable Use of the Reason which God XIII.  
has given them. *Difficulties* and *Obscuri-*  
*ties* in the *Scriptures* we grant there are,  
and have often proved that 'tis fit there  
*should be*: But does it *therefore* follow, that  
those *Scriptures* (in which, by the way, for  
one thing *difficult*, there are a hundred *plain*  
even to the meanest Capacity) are not, ta-  
ken all together, the *Word of God*; after  
they have, from the plainest Facts, been de-  
monstrated to be so? Besides, what is *diffi-*  
*cult*, and even *unintelligible*, to *one*, may not  
be so to *another*; and some of the darkest  
Passages have by acute and learned Men  
been made wonderfully clear. But suppo-  
sing it were *otherwise*, the Argument against  
us is nothing: And I appeal to every rea-  
sonable and unprejudiced Person, whether  
of all Inconsequences any in the World was  
ever more senseless and irrational. Here is  
a Book proved by the most uncontestable  
Facts to be the *Word of God*: There are  
*some* Things in it which we do not *under-*  
*stand*, nay which appear *strange* and *unac-*  
*countable* to us: *Therefore* it is *not* the Word  
of God. Is this *conclusive*? Is this the Lo-



SERM. gick of *Free-thinkers* truly so call'd? Here

XIII. is an *Act of Parliament*, which we all know  
 to be pass'd by the *King* and the *States* of  
 the *Realm*: There are *some* Things in it  
 which to us (*some* of us at least) are ve-  
 ry difficult, nay *strange* and *unaccountable*:  
*Therefore 'tis no Act of Parliament.* Then  
 again, for the alledged *Inconsistencies* and  
*Contradictions*; every thing is not an Incon-  
 sistency and Contradiction, which *seems* to  
 be so, or is *pretended* to be so. Those al-  
 ledged very well may be, and actually have  
 been, sufficiently accounted for and recon-  
 ciled: Or if there were *some* appearing In-  
 consistencies not fully cleared, that would  
 be no Argument when put in Balance against  
 plain *Facts*; unless they were flat, down-  
 right *Contradictions* indeed: Of which I  
 know not one so much as pretended to be  
 urged against us, except the Doctrine of the  
*Trinity*: And that is no *Contradiction*, as we  
 have often shewn; and those who object  
 against it as such, either speak against their  
 Knowledge, or do not understand the State  
 of the Point, or do not know *what* a Con-  
 tradiction *is*: Which last (by the bye) is  
 the Case of many who talk so positively  
 about

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about *Contradictions*. And this leads me SERM.  
farther to observe, that the Great ones, XIII.  
the Men of Learning and Parts, (if such  
there be) among our modern Infidels, know  
very well that there is not the least Sha-  
dow of Argument in the Cavils aforesaid:  
Nay every one of *good Sense*, though with-  
out any *Learning*, if he duly weighs and  
considers these Matters, *must* know that  
there is not. However, they work with  
these wretched Materials as well as they  
can, putting them into the Heads and  
Mouths of their ignorant Followers and  
Admirers, who may really be deluded by  
such shallow Sophistry. And accordingly  
we shall hear these Crudities vented in Con-  
versation by illiterate half-witted Triflers,  
blown up with Pride and Self-conceit, va-  
luing themselves upon talking out of the  
way, and imagining that they are wiser  
than the rest of the Company, only be-  
cause they have more Confidence, and much  
less Understanding. These, with a certain  
*pragmatical Gravity*, shall tell us *this* or *that*  
thing in the *Bible* is absurd, inconsistent,  
contrary to Reason, and therefore cannot  
be true; and so the *Bible* cannot be the

SERM. *Word of God.* They will add too, that they

XIII. have no Notion of *Mysteries*, and will believe nothing which they cannot *comprehend*.

Wonderful! What deep Philosophers are these, who know nothing of Philosophy? Whereas their Neighbours, of the same Education and Way of Living, but of much more Modesty and Sense than themselves, are very well satisfied that they may rationally *believe* what they do not fully *understand*, when God has assured them that so it is. And those who are really Philosophers find themselves surrounded with *Mysteries*, even in *Nature*, and in the most common Objects; and are very certain that though they *apprehend* many Things, they *comprehend* very few Things. Here again the Masters and Leaders of these poor self-conceited Ignorants know that there is *nothing* in the Objections about *Mysteries*, nor indeed in any thing else which they alledge. But the *real hard Sayings* are those which relate to *Practice*, not to *Faith*. The Men are *wicked*, and resolve to *continue* wicked: And so would make themselves easy, if they could, (though even that is impossible) by taking Refuge in the wretched Sanctu-

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*apostatizing from Christianity.* 311

ary of Infidelity. *Whoremongers and Adul-* SERM.  
*terers God will judge\**. That's ONE hard XIII.  
 Saying. *Except ye repent, ye shall all like-*  
*wise perish* †. That's ANOTHER. Be not  
 deceived: Neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters,  
 nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers  
 of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor  
 Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor  
 Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of  
 God ‡. That's a Cluster of hard Sayings.  
 Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting  
 Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels||.  
 That's the HARDEST Saying of ALL: And  
 what profane, profligate, harden'd Libertine  
 can hear or endure it? This is the *real* Truth  
 of the whole Matter: And I appeal to the  
 whole World, even to these Men them-  
 selves, whether they do not from their  
 Hearts *believe*, or rather *know*, it to be so.  
 These, I say, not those about *Difficulties*,  
*Mysteries*, pretended *Inconsistencies* and *Con-*  
*tradictions*; these, and such like, are the  
*hard Sayings* which make the miserable Men  
 I am speaking of go back from our blessed  
 Saviour, and walk no more with him.

X 4

II. BUT

\* Heb. xiii. 4. † Luke xiii. 3. ‡ 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.  
 || Matt. xxv. 41.



SERM.

XIII.

II. BUT then such their Defection and Apostasy is no Argument why *others* should follow them, or imitate their Example, but it rather ought to make them more cautious and careful. *Will ye also go away?* Which was the *Second* Observation. This is so plain in *Reason*, that were not the Prevalence of *ill Examples* very great in *Fact*, we could not without Absurdity insist upon it. *MANY of his Disciples went back, &c.* If they had been *many more*, this had been no Argument why *others* should do the like, and go away after them. We must *not follow a Multitude to do Evil\**. Examples, *mere* Examples, even of the *best* Men, are no direct Rule of Conscience, much less the Examples of the *worst*. Is their Defection *itself* an Argument for their Defection? And because *they* have left *Christ* and *us*, is it a Consequence that *we* ought to follow *them*? But they will say they do not *Evil* in forsaking *Christ*; they are not the *worst* of Men, nor *ill* Men at all; they are in the *right*, and their Cause is *good* and *just*. Let them *prove* that, we are answer'd, and will yield

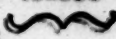
\* Numb. xxiii. 2.

yield the Point to them. But I say their SERM.  
Defection itself is no Argument on *their* XIII.  
Side; and I grant, on the other hand, that  
'tis no Argument on *ours*. It proves nothing  
at all, on the *one* Side or on the *other*. Let  
the Use we make of it be *this*, that we be  
more careful and cautious, and more dili-  
gent in examining whether *these Things are*  
*so*\*. For we are so far from persuading  
Men to believe blindly, and without *Think-*  
*ing* or *Proving*, that we persuade them to  
the direct *contrary*. And upon occasion of  
this Apostasy in particular, they not only  
*may*, but *ought* to enquire the more, with  
more than ordinary Diligence and Appli-  
cation, that they may not only *hold fast*,  
but be able to *defend* their Religion, and be  
*ready always to give an Answer to every Man*  
*that asketh them a Reason of the Faith and*  
*Hope that is in them*†. In Times of War  
and Danger, of Invasion or Rebellion, it is,  
we know, customary not only that the *Sol-*  
*diers* should be more than usually upon their  
Guard, and practised in the Exercise of  
their Arms, but that those should bear  
Arms (if they are able) who never did so  
*before*:

\* Acts xvii. 11.

† 1 Pet. iii. 15.

SERM. before : If a Man's *Estate* be called in *Question*, he will naturally, and very rationally, be more than ordinarily careful in examining his *Title* : And if our never so long received Opinions, or our Religion itself, be openly *attacked*, this is an Intimation or Warning to us more diligently to consider and examine the *Grounds* and *Motives* upon which we *proceed*. And in the Name of God let Reason, *true, right, unprejudiced* Reason, be Judge between Us and our Adversaries. For we readily acknowledge that it is the Province of *Reason* to judge of *Revelation*, so far as to determine upon the Evidence, whether it be a *true* Revelation, and *really* came from God, or *no* : Though, when *that* is once proved, the same *Reason* tells us that we ought to receive and embrace as a Truth whatever God says, notwithstanding some Things he says may be above our Comprehension. For it amounts to no more than *this*, that we allow *His* Thoughts to be superior to *Ours*, submit to his Authority, and take some Things upon Trust from Him who can neither deceive, nor be deceived. Let his and our Adversaries *argue* as *much*, and *think* as *freely*, as they

they please; the more the better, always SERM.  
 provided that it be *real* Free-thinking, and XIII.  
 that they be not (as they are at present) the   
 greatest Slaves to *Prejudice* upon the Face  
 of the Earth. Let them *really* argue, not  
*cavil* only: No more Wrangling about *hard*  
*Sayings*, *Difficulties* in the *Scriptures*, *Incon-*  
*sistencies*, &c. Let them speak to the *Facts*,  
 if they will speak to the *Purpose*; the *Facts*  
 which we alledge as *Proofs*, even to a *De-*  
*monstration*, that the *Christian Religion* is  
*true*, and that the *Old* and *New Testament*  
 are the *Word of God*. And they shall never  
 bring us to admit that these *Facts* are *false*,  
 unless they not only *say* it, but *prove* it.  
 Here again Cavilling, Scoffing, and Blaf-  
 pheming, will never do the Business: We  
 say, we have thoroughly proved them to be  
*true*; let them prove them to be *false*, if  
 they are able. And let all *Christians* stick  
 close to these: *Facts* are plain Things, and  
 a Child may apprehend them: But *Cavil-*  
*ling* is endless, and Fools may cavil about  
 any thing. I say therefore, that these Men's  
 renouncing the *Christian Faith* is no Argu-  
 ment either way; and the Use we make  
 of it should be to excite our Care and Cau-  
 tion,



SERM. tion, and more thoroughly consider the  
 XIII. Grounds and Motives of our Faith. And  
 as *that* is no Argument in favour of their  
 Infidelity, so they are not able to produce  
 any *other*: I mean any *true* or *substantial*  
 one, or which really deserves the Name of  
 an Argument. Which leads us to the *Third*  
 and *main* Point of all:

III. THAT no Man can forsake *Christ*,  
 and his Religion, without being infinitely  
 a *Lofer* by so doing; and every Person of  
 unprejudiced Reason will be the more as-  
 sured of the *Truth* of *Christianity*, the more  
 thoroughly and deeply he *considers* it. *Lord*,  
*to whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of*  
*eternal Life.*—But this must be deferr'd to  
 the next Opportunity.

SERMON

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## SERMON XIV.

### The Folly and Misery of Apostatizing from CHRISTIANITY.

The Second Sermon on this Subject.

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JOHN VI. 66, 67, 68.

*From that Time many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

*Then said Jesus unto the Twelve, Will ye also go away?*

*Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life.*

**I** COME now (as I proposed) to the SERM.  
Third and main Point of all, laid down XIV.  
in my last Discourse:

III. THAT no Man can forsake *Christ*,  
and his Religion, without being infinitely a  
*Loser*.

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SERM. *Loser* by so doing, and every Person of un-  
 XIV. prejudiced Reason will be the more assured  
 of the *Truth of Christianity*, the more thoroughly and deeply he considers it. *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life.*

THE *First Branch* of this Head (for the other will afterwards, and naturally, fall in of course) I shall consider in a *threefold Aspect*:

- 1<sup>st</sup>, As to *Revealed Religion in general.*
- 2<sup>dly</sup>, As to the *Christian in particular.*
- 3<sup>dly</sup>, AND more particularly, as to the *Immortality of the Soul*, and a future eternal State after *Death.*

1. *First* then, for Divine Revelation, or Revealed Religion in *general.* Suppose there were no such Thing, what should we get by that? Nay, should we not be great *Losers*? Is it not a great Honour, Advantage, and Happiness to be guided and directed by *God* himself? For those of our Adversaries, who love to call themselves *Deists*, must, by their very Name, acknowledge there *is* a God. When *God* himself then is pleased to be their Guide, will they *refuse* to be guided by him? If they will,

to whom should they go, who can guide them SERM.  
better? Or can they have a surer Direction XIV.  
than that of infinite Wisdom and Good-  
ness? The wisest of the *Heathen* Philoso-  
phers, for whom these Men would appear  
to have so great a Veneration, (some of  
them without understanding them, or so  
much as knowing what they said) were  
sensible of their own Blindness, or of the  
Darkness in which they groped, for want  
of a Revelation from the Supreme Being;  
and declar'd there could be no solid Assu-  
rance or Satisfaction *without* it. And shall  
we, who have such a Revelation, reject it  
after we have it, and cast it back in the  
Face of him who gave it us?

2dly, As to the *Christian* Revelation, or  
Religion, in particular; our Adversaries  
themselves, I think, do not find fault with  
it upon the Account of any *Deficiency*, ei-  
ther with regard to *Faith* or *Practice*. Ac-  
cording to them, it is rather *redundant* than  
*defective*; containing not too little, but too  
much. Or, if there be any *Deficiency*, let  
us be told in *what*. Can there be a more  
perfect System of *Morality*, or *practical* Re-  
ligion, than the *Christian*? I have in ano-  
ther



SERM. *ther* Discourse \* shewn its Perfection in *this*

XIV. Respect, and shall not now repeat it. Can  
 any Laws be deliver'd more plainly and  
 clearly, or be guarded with stronger San-  
 ctions of Rewards and Punishments? These  
*last* our Adversaries are so far from not ac-  
 knowledging to be threaten'd in the *Gospel*,  
 that they are the very Ground and Founda-  
 tion of their Quarrel *against* it. They cannot  
 bear the Thoughts of being *punished*, espe-  
 cially to all *Eternity*: And therefore have  
 taken much Pains to *prove*, or rather have  
 over and over confidently *affirm'd*, that God  
*cannot* punish, or that to inflict Pains upon his  
 Creatures is *contrary* to his *Nature*. But let  
 it be observed, that by such their Assertion  
 they contradict the *Scriptures*, which we  
 have often demonstrated to be the *Word of*  
*God*. And upon our Violation of his Laws,  
 lest we should give ourselves up to Despon-  
 dency and Desperation, he has by the *Gos-  
 pel* graciously provided a Remedy for Sin,  
 which is true *Repentance*; and upon that  
 has declared that he will be reconciled to  
 the Sinner, freely pardon and forgive him,  
 and receive him into his Favour, as if he  
 had

*apostatizing from Christianity.* 321

had never offended. All this through the SERM.  
 Merits, Mediation, and Intercession of *Je-* XIV.  
*sus Christ*, who died to save even the \* *chief*  
*of Sinners*. Thus is infinite *Justice* satisfied,  
 and infinite *Mercy* extended. And all these  
 Things are proper and peculiar to the *Chri-*  
*stian* Religion; nor can any other Dispen-  
 sation whatsoever pretend to any one of  
 them. If we forsake *Christ* therefore, to  
*whom* indeed shall we go? For *who*, like Him,  
 has these *Words of eternal Life*?

3dly, AND more particularly: As to the  
*Immortality* of the *Soul*, and a future ever-  
 lasting State, the best and wisest of the an-  
 cient *Heathen* Philosophers rather believed  
 it, upon the Dictates of their own natural  
 Reason; heartily wish'd for, and panted af-  
 ter a full Assurance of it; but still were full  
 of Doubts, Uncertainties, and Perplexities  
 concerning it. *Such Knowledge* was too won-  
 derful and excellent for them, and they could  
 not attain unto it†. This, to omit other  
 Instances, appears from the Speculations of  
 old *Cato* in *Tully*, and *Socrates* in *Plato*. But  
 now *Christianity* has clear'd all this: *Christ*  
 hath abolish'd *Death*, and brought *Life* and

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Y

*Immor-*

\* 1 Tim. i. 15. † Psalm cxxxix. 6.

SERM. *Immortality to light through the Gospel* \*.

XIV. And here let us consider the Difference between an *ancient Heathen*, and a *modern one*; between a Heathen *before* Christianity, and a Heathen *since* Christianity; between a Heathen who *never was* a Christian, and a Heathen who has *apostatized* from being a Christian. The *former* (I speak of the *wisest* and *best* of them) being virtuously disposed, long'd for an Assurance of *Immortality*, but could not *obtain* it: The *latter* being viciously disposed, have the fullest Assurance of Immortality; but most ungratefully, obstinately, profanely, and blasphemously *reject* it, or rather *pretend* to reject it: (For, in Truth and Reality, they are not *able* to do so:) And the Reason is plain, which was before intimated. *This is their Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and they love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are evil* †. For my own Part, (however theſe Men may call us *Believers* narrow-ſoul'd) I verily believe that many wiſe, great, and good Men among the *Pagans* are now in a State of Happineſs, through the *Merits* of that *Chriſt* of whom they were

\* 2 Tim. i. 10. † John iii. 19.

were ignorant, since they were virtuous ac-  
 cording to the best of their Knowledge, SERM. XIV.  
 though they have no Title to the *Christian*  
 Salvation, as not being included within the  
*Covenant of Grace*: But as for these Infidels  
 among Us who oppose the clearest Light of  
 the Gospel, it cannot be but that without  
 the severest *Repentance*, and the most pub-  
 lick *Recantation*, eternal Misery must in-  
 evitably be their Portion.

BUT now if we turn the *Perspective*;  
 what Comfort or solid Support has the In-  
 fidel in any one of these Respects, while  
 he opposes *Revealed Religion in general*, the  
*Christian in particular*, and the *Immortality*  
*of the Soul* yet more particularly?

As to the *First*; he sets up *Reason*, or  
*Natural Religion* in the room of it. But is  
*Human Reason* better than *Divine Wisdom*,  
 and *Natural Religion* than *Revealed*? Cer-  
 tainly God is more able to direct us, than  
 we are to direct ourselves, or one another:  
 And his Laws must be much more clear,  
 plain, and distinct when committed to Wri-  
 ting, than they can be in the Religion of  
*Nature*, miserably depraved and corrupted  
 as it now is.



SERM. BUT the *Aptnesses* or *Fitnesses* of Things,  
 XIV. it seems, are to answer all Difficulties: By  
 these even the Laws of God are to be judg'd  
 of; and to be rejected, if what they command be not *apt* and *fit* in *itself*, and agreeable to the *Nature* and *Reasons* of Things. Doubtless, God commands nothing but what is *apt* and *fit*; but who can best judge of that *Aptness* and *Fitness*? *He*, or *We*? Nay, what is *Aptness* and *Fitness*? These Men would fain have every thing else referred to it; but sure it is itself a *relative* Notion: For to be *apt* and *fit* must relate to some *Rule*, *Measure*, or *Standard*, upon which that *Aptness* and *Fitness* depends. And what should that Rule be in the Case we are now considering? The *Reason* of *Man*, or the *Wisdom* of *God*? The *latter*, one would imagine. In the infinite Mind of the absolutely perfect Being are the *Archetypes*, the *Patterns*, or (if you please) the *Reasons* of all Things: And every thing is *congruous*, or *incongruous*, as it *agrees*, or *disagrees*, with those original Standards. When therefore we can once prove that he has commanded this or that, we ought not to argue *thus*, It is *not* apt or fit, and therefore

fore we ought to reject it; but *thus*, It is SERM. apt and fit because God has commanded it, XIV. and therefore we ought *not* to reject it. 

THEN again, when these mighty *Philosophers* talk so much about the *Law of Nature*, I ask them, What do they mean by the Word *Law*? A *Law improperly* so call'd, as when we say the *Law of Motion*, of *Gravitation*, &c. meaning no more by it than a certain *Order* and *Tendency* in the natural Course of Things? If so, they talk about what is nothing to the Purpose: For the Dispute between Us and Them is about something of a quite different Kind. Not but that (by the way) even these *Fitnesses* and *Aptnesses* come from God, as *Creator*, (though not as *Legislator*) and upon him alone entirely depend. If then by the Word *Law* they understand (as they ought to do, if they will speak to the Point) a *Law strictly* and *properly* so call'd, *i. e.* a *Rule of Action* given to *moral Agents*, I ask them, 2dly, What do they mean by the Word *Nature*? The *Complication* of *Properties* in the several *Species* of Beings, as when we say the *Nature* of *Man*, of a *Brute*, of *Gold*, &c.? If they do, how can a *Law* be given

SERM. as a *Rule of moral Actions* by such a *Nature*

XIV. as this? If by *Nature* they mean the *God*  
 of *Nature*, as the Word is very often used  
 both in Philosophy and Divinity, and even  
 in common Discourse, and *must* be used  
 here, if we talk Sense, and talk to the Pur-  
 pose; then the Law of *Nature* is itself the  
 Law of *God*: As indeed it is, though not a  
*written* one, but either revealed to our first  
 Parents immediately after their Creation,  
 and so deliver'd downwards to Posterity;  
 or innate and impress'd upon our Minds;  
 or being of itself so plain and luminous,  
 that by the common Use of our natural  
 uncorrupted Faculties we must needs dis-  
 cover it, and assent to it. But how insuf-  
 ficient this Law is, as it now stands, must  
 be evident to All who make a true Use of  
 their Reason, or will even believe plain  
 Fact, and their own Experience. Our Ad-  
 versaries then say, they have *Natural Reli-*  
*gion*: Be it so; yet it *will not do*: It is blind,  
 dark, uncertain, miserably corrupted and  
 depraved. Nor will the Doctrine of *Apt-*  
*nesses* and *Fitnesses* in the least mend the  
 Matter: For what is it, but a mere empty  
 Sound of Words without any Meaning? I  
 have

have in some measure laid it open already; SERM.  
but to go a little farther: Will all Mankind XIV.  
*agree* in their Notion of these *Aptnesses* and  
*Fitnesses*? One shall think that to be *apt* and  
*fit*, which *another* thinks to be quite other-  
wise. Set aside the *written* Law of God,  
this Man shall judge it very *apt* and *fit* (be-  
cause he *likes* it) to be drunk and lewd, as  
often as he pleases. Another, not being  
addicted to *those* Vices, shall condemn them  
as *incongruous*, and *disagreeable* to the *System*  
*of Things*: But he shall think it extremely  
*apt* and *fit* to lie, cheat, and steal; those  
Practices are agreeable to the *Nature of*  
*Things*, because they are agreeable to his  
*own* Nature, *i. e.* his *own Inclinations*. Much  
the same may be said of that Sovereign  
Dictator *Reason*, so much celebrated and  
magnified of late Years. Reason? *What*  
Reason? and *Whose* Reason? For does not  
*one* Man's *Reason* tell him this, and *another's*  
that? I grant the *general Faculty* of *Reason*  
is the same in All. But do particular Per-  
sons make the same Use of it as to particu-  
lar Things? Do they not judge diversely,  
and quite contrary to one another? I grant  
likewise that there are some Propositions



SERM. which all Mankind agree in, as soon as the

XIV. Terms are heard and understood; also some practical and moral Propositions, in which All who have *any* Religion agree. I grant further, that *Reason* is itself a most noble Faculty; that it argues justly, and concludes rightly in very many Instances; and particularly that it may and ought to judge of the Truth of Revelation itself, as I said before. But what is all this to the innumerable *contrary* Judgments that are and ever have been made, and in nothing more, nay in nothing half so much as in *Morality* and *Religion*? And now *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes*? Who shall guide this Guide, *Human Reason*? Why, *God* shall guide it, if it will be guided by him. If it will not, if some Men think their Reason too good to be guided by him, that is wholly to themselves. *God* has done *his* Part; he has given his *revealed Will*, committed to *Writing*, in a Body of *plain Laws*, to be a *Rule* and *Direction* for *All*. In these nothing can be *unjust*, because he is infinitely *just*; nothing *hard* or *rigorous*, because he is infinitely *good*; nothing *erroneous* or *false*, *unapt* or *unfit*, because he is infinitely *wise*, and is himself

himself the Pattern and Standard of all SERM.  
*Truth and Congruity.* XIV.

HERE likewise as the Lawgiver is God, (for we *Christians* when we speak of *Laws* have always a View to a *Legislator*, though our Adversaries upon the Subject of their *Aptnesses* and *Fitnesses* seem not to have any such Notion, but talk most wildly and unaccountably in that respect) I say, as the *Lawgiver* is *God*, who surely has *sufficient Authority* over us, so the *Laws* are *certain, fix'd, determin'd*: And by these the various, fluctuating, contradictory Opinions of *Men* are to be settled and adjusted. *They* are *innumerable*, but *God* is *one*; *They* are subject to endless *Errors*, but *He* is *infallible*. Should we not then adhere to *his Laws*, rather than to *our own uncertain Reason*? Whether we should, or not, let *Reason itself* judge.

THUS for *Revelation* in general. And as to the *Christian* in particular, we need not be long upon *that*; because what has been already urged is applicable *here*, only with this Addition, that of *all Revelations* the *Christian* is the *best*; which our Adversaries themselves, did they own any Revelation  
at

SERM. at all, I suppose would not deny. The  
 XIV. *Law of Nature*, be it what it will, is not  
 so clear and explicit as the *Gospel of Christ*.  
 For the Truth of which Assertion we must  
 appeal to All who know any thing of the  
*Law of Nature*, and have read the *New*  
*Testament*; which is all the Argument or  
 Proof the Thing will admit of, except an  
 Induction of Particulars: A Specimen of  
 which I have given in *another Discourse*.\*

If we consider in the *third Place*, and  
 more particularly, the *Immortality of the*  
*Soul*, and a future eternal State, what Com-  
 fort has the Infidel who denies it? Why,  
 he proposes and hopes to be *Nothing* after  
 Death: And is not this a *noble Comfort* for  
 a *rational Creature*, and a *Philosopher*? They  
 are pleased to call *Believers* Men of *narrow*  
*Souls*, of *little* and *contracted* Notions; and  
 themselves the only *generous*, as well as *free*,  
 Thinkers. But can any thing be more *un-*  
*generous*, *narrow-soul'd*, and *base*, any thing  
 more *unworthy* of a *Man*, than that Prin-  
 ciple of theirs, to wish and desire that they  
 may *die like Beasts*? Do we on the contrary  
 deserve that Charge for hoping and believ-  
 ing

ing that we shall be *immortal*, and live to SERM.  
*Eternity*? But the Mischief is, they abhor the XIV.  
Thoughts of a future State; because, if there  
*be* one, they know they shall be *miserable* in it.  
And to *Them*, I confess, and to all *Others*, who  
are, and are resolved to continue *wicked*, a fu-  
ture State is no comfortable Consideration.  
But why *are* they wicked? Why do they  
not by the true Faith, and Practice of all  
*Christian* Virtues, make the Soul's *Immorta-*  
*lity* Matter of *Rejoicing* to them, instead of  
*Terror*? And here let all Persons whatso-  
ever be infinitely careful that they ruin not  
themselves by bewildering and confounding  
their Thoughts with such vain Speculations  
as these; how *eternal Punishments* can be  
reconciled with the *Justice* and *Goodness* of  
God; whether, considering the Wicked-  
ness of the World, and how few compara-  
tively seem likely to be saved, it were not  
better upon the Whole that there were no  
future State at all, &c. It is certainly *fit*  
it *should* be so, because in *fact* it is so: God  
cannot cease to be *just* and *good*, though *most*  
Men's Understandings are *weak*, and all  
Men's *finite*; and few can in any Degree,  
none perhaps can fully, account for these  
Things



SERM. Things in point of *Reason*. But to return.

XIV. The miserable Men of whom we are speaking, to avoid that dreadful Thought a future State, will needs set up the *Oracles of Reason*, (as some of them are pleased to express themselves) *i. e.* their *own* foolish, depraved, prejudiced Reason, in Opposition to the *real lively Oracles* of Divine Revelation.

AND here it will be proper briefly to consider some of their Argumentations upon this Article. To shew the *Insufficiency of mere Reason* and *Natural Religion*, as corrupted since the Fall of Man, we urge the abominable Wickedness and Immorality of the *Heathen World* in general, and even of the *Heathen Philosophers*, most of them at least, in particular. To this they answer, that Vice and Wickedness reigns among *Christians*, as well as among *Pagans*; and therefore this is as good an Argument against the *Gospel*, as against *Human Reason*. But are they in earnest? I ask them, 1<sup>st</sup>, Does Vice reign *so much* among *Christians*, as it did and does among *Pagans*? or any thing like it? If they affirm that it *does*, they affirm what the whole World knows

knows to be *false*: And all they have to support their Assertion is, their alledging some unwary *rhetorical* Expressions of one or two particular Divines in a *declamatory* and *hyperbolical* Way, inveighing against the Wickedness and Corruption of *Christians*. To which we reply, that those Expressions are *false* in themselves, and *imprudently* utter'd: And what is this to the Truth or Merits of the Cause? 2dly, The *Heathen*, some even of the *wisest* and *best* among them, were vicious upon *Principle*, as well as in *Practice*. Their Religion itself was immoral: They taught for Doctrines the grossest Crimes; as Idolatry, Fornication, the Exposing and Murdering of Infants, and some more. Are *such* Doctrines, or *any* immoral Doctrines whatsoever, taught in the *Gospel*? Nothing like it, but the direct contrary. This being so, the Wickedness of the *Christian* World (which we own to be very great, though not near so great as that of the *Pagan*) is no Argument against *Christianity*: For if the *Violation* of a Law be a Proof that it is not a *good* Law, there never was a good Law made either by *God* or *Man*. Here, by the way, occurs another

SERM. ther of their Reasonings. They argue a-  
 XIV. gainst the *Gospel* from the *ill Lives* of Mul-  
 titudes who profess it. But does it follow,  
 that the *Gospel* is *insufficient*, because it is  
*not irresistible*? If it *were* irresistible, there  
 would be an End of *Free-Will*, and conse-  
 quently of all *Virtue*. It is *sufficient*, be-  
 cause it *wants* nothing which it ought to  
*have*: But it ought not to be *irresistible* for  
 the Reason now mentioned. 3dly, We *see*  
 the *Gospel* with our Eyes, and find it to be  
 always one and the same; fix'd and deter-  
 min'd: Consequently, are sure that the  
 Wickedness of the World is a Violation of  
 it, and therefore not chargeable upon it.  
 Can the same be said of *Reason*? That we  
 cannot *see* it, or *read* it in a *Book*, will, I  
 hope, be granted: And its miserable Un-  
 certainty in the Use made of it by particu-  
 lar Persons has been already taken notice  
 of. We may therefore be very sure, that  
 the Wickedness of those, who have no  
 other Guide or Law than this, must be in  
 a great measure owing to the Insufficiency  
 of that Guide or Law, and to their Want  
 of a better. Here again we may well ask,  
 in

in passing, Where is the *Lawgiver*? What SERM.  
*Authority* has *one* Man's Reason over *Another*, or indeed over *Himself*? It may be a XIV.  
*Guide*, or if you please *make a Law*, in a  
 loose, wide, and *analogical* Sense, meaning  
 by it a mere *Rule*, or *Direction*; but not a  
*Law*, strictly and properly speaking: Be-  
 cause, according to this Scheme, there is  
 no *Lawgiver*. For a *Lawgiver* must be a  
*Being*, or *Person*, *distinct* from him to whom  
 the Law is given, and have *Authority* to  
*command* and *punish* him.

BUT we shall be told, that all we have  
 said upon the *Usefulness* and *Excellence* of  
 Revelation, and Christianity, signifies no-  
 thing; because we proceed upon a *false Sup-*  
*position*, and imagine that to be in *Being*  
 which really is *not*: There is no *Probability*  
 of *Revelation* in *general*, nor *Proof* of the  
*Christian* in *particular*. This belongs to the  
*second* Division of this *Third* General Head,  
 And to the *first* Part of this mere Assertion  
 without the least Proof I answer, *1st, A po-*  
*steriori*: It cannot be *improbable* in *Reason*,  
 because it is *certain* in *Fact*: Of which  
 hereafter, when we come to the *Christian*  
 Reve-



SERM. Revelation in particular. 2dly, *A priori* :

XIV. It is so far from being improbable that God *should* reveal his Will to Mankind, that it is vastly absurd to suppose he should *not*. It is inconsistent with the infinite Wisdom, and other Perfections of the Divine Nature. God is the *Sovereign* of the Universe, and all Mankind are his *Subjects*: And is it not contrary even to *human* Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice, for a Prince to govern his Subjects without giving them *Laws*, or making known his *Will* to them? Nay, without this, how *can* he govern them, or they be governed *by* him? But perhaps it will be said by these Men, as it was by the *Epicurean* Deists before them, that God never *intended* to govern us at all, nor to reward or punish us, nor in the least to concern himself about us. Why then did he give us these noble Faculties of *Reasoning* and *Thinking*, *Judging* and *Understanding*; and make us *capable* of being governed, rewarded, and punished? According to this Account, he gave us those Faculties in vain, which is contrary to his Nature. We by Experience find in ourselves such Excellencies

cies as make us deserve the peculiar Care of SERM. 2  
the Supreme Being. We see manifest Marks XIV.  
of God's Wisdom and Providence in the  
Guidance of the *Material* World, of Be-  
ings far inferior to us: And shall We, the  
Head of the visible Creation, who are a  
Kind of Gods in comparison of the highest  
Brute, be utterly neglected and disregarded  
by him? But here, as in most of our Dis-  
putes with these unreasonable Men, we  
have little more to do, than appeal to the  
Common Sense and Reason of Mankind.  
For, without proving *any* thing *Themselves*,  
they put *Us* upon the Proof of *such* Things  
as are scarce *capable* of being proved, not  
because they are too *difficult*, but too *easy*;  
because we have hardly any thing *plainer*  
to prove them *by*. From *Speculation* there-  
fore let us go on to *Facts*; which are *stub-*  
*born Things*, and not easily cavill'd or  
wrangled out of the World.

It is insinuated then, in the *second* Place,  
that there is no *Proof* of the *Christian* Re-  
velation in *particular*. No? We thought  
there *bad*. We thought we had *proved*,  
even to a *Demonstration*, that it is certainly  
*true*, nay impossible to be *false*. Must we

SERM. repeat them, and go over all again? So  
 XIV. these People seem to expect. But is there  
 ~~~~~ any Sense or Reason in this? Must we be  
 eternally proving the same Thing, which
 has been already proved a thousand times
 over; because they are resolved to be eter-
 nally cavilling, eternally asserting and de-
 nying, without proving or disproving any
 thing at all? We refer to what we have *al-*
ready demonstrated; and say, that the more
 any unprejudiced Person considers the *Evi-*
dence for *Christianity*, the more he will be
 convinced of its *Truth*. Have they *dis-*
proved this? No, they have not so much as
pretended to it. All therefore I farther add,
 is to observe, that as they never *have* dis-
 proved these Facts, so 'tis *impossible* they ever
should: For how will they proceed? How
 will they prove this Negative, that those
 Things were *not* done, which *we* have
 proved *were* done? How will they *set about*
it? History tells us, for instance, and it was
 never question'd by any body, that there
 was such a Prince as *Alexander* the Great,
 that he overthrew the *Persian* Monarchy,
 conquer'd Part of *India*, and the like. Now
 here is a Man, suppose, takes it into his
 Head

Head that all this is *false*; at least he *says* SERM.
it is: I would fain know how he will *prove* XIV.
it to be *false*, even supposing it *were* so. In
like manner we affirm, from the Faith of
History, and the common Principles upon
which all Mankind proceed in Matters of
this Nature, that in the Reigns of *Augustus*
and *Tiberius*, Emperors of *Rome*, much later
than the Days of *Alexander*, there were
such Persons as *Jesus Christ*, and *twelve Men*
call'd his *Apostles*; that they *did* such and
such *Things*, and some of them *wrote* cer-
tain *Books*. How will our Adversaries *dis-*
prove this? They will answer, it may be,
that there is a great Difference between the
two Cases; the Facts concerning *Alexander*,
and those concerning *Christ* and his *Apostles*.
There is indeed: Because there is ten times
more Evidence for the Truth of the *latter*,
than of the *former*. Yes, but the *latter*
were *wonderful* and *strange* Things. They
were so; otherwise they would have signi-
fied nothing, and we could now make no
Use of them. But because a Thing is *won-*
derful and *strange*, is it therefore *incredible*;
after it has been *demonstrated* to be *true*, nay
impossible to be false? Is it such a *Wonder*,

SERM. that there should be some *wonderful Things*?

XIV. Events or Occurrences unusual, and out of the ordinary Course, are what we commonly call strange and wonderful: But that God should be *always able*, and *sometimes willing*, to do such Things, is not strange or wonderful at all. I see nothing therefore that can help the Cause of our Adversaries, but their proving that the *Facts* we contend for are *impossible*, as *implying a Contradiction in Reason and Nature*. All short of this is vain and impertinent. And is it a *Contradiction* that he who *created* the World should be always able, and, upon so necessary an Occasion as revealing his Will to Mankind, should think fit actually to *suspend* or *alter* the Course of it, in some *particular* Instances, so as to work what we call *Miracles*? Is it a *Contradiction* that infinite Power and Wisdom in conjunction should, upon such an Occasion, in a Moment *heal the Sick*, preternaturally *darken the Sun*, or *raise the Dead*? If these Men think it is, let them endeavour to *prove* it: And then it will be time enough for us to *answer* them.

THE

apostatizing from Christianity. 341

THE Usefulness and Excellency, the SERM.
 Truth and Certainty of *Revelation* and *Chri-* XIV.
stianity being thus establish'd, *to whom should*
we go after having deserted *Christ*? Or what
 shall we *get* by such a Desertion? Nay,
 suppose he had *not* the *Words of eternal Life*,
 suppose his Religion were not *true*, or not
good; *to whom shall we go* for a *truer*, or a
better? Or what shall we *gain* by having
 none at all? The Falseness or Insufficiency
 of *all other* Religions, the Weakness of Hu-
 man Reason, and the Madness and Misery
 of having *no* Religion, are Points which
 have been fully considered. Supposing ours
 were not true, *eternal Life* however is a
 pleasing Thought to good Men; and it is
 both pleasant and profitable *to be good*, even
 with respect to this *present Life*. The Im-
 mortality of the Soul was so agreeable a
 Contemplation to the great *Cato* in *Tully*,
 * “ *that if in this I err*, says he, *that I be-*
lieve the Souls of Men to be immortal, I err
willingly and gladly; nor while I live will I
 Z 3 *have*

* Quòd si in hoc erro, quòd animos hominum immorta-
 les esse credam, libenter erro: nec mihi hunc errorem, quo
 delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo. Cíc. *De Senectute*,
sub Fin.

SERM. *have this Error, with which I am so delighted,*
 XIV. *extorted from me."* They are his own

Words, as there represented. Could our Infidels *be sure* that there is no future State, they might so far *make themselves easy*, as they love to speak: But that they cannot be. Here again we make the same Observation as before: *We* say we *can*, and *have* proved, *probably* from Reason, *certainly* from Scripture, that there *is* a future State: But 'tis impossible for *Them* to prove there is *none*, even supposing there *were* none: And therefore, to put it at the very lowest, they cannot but have anxious and fearfully mis-giving Thoughts, lest in the Issue they should by dreadful Experience *find* and *feel* that there *is* one. And for the Truth of this I appeal to the common Reason of all Mankind. What is it therefore that these miserable Men pretend to, and value themselves upon? Why, a *generous Attempt* to *free Mankind* from *slavish Fears*, infused into them by *Superstition*, i. e. by *Christianity*. Yes, but they *cannot* do it; the Thing is *impossible*. They cannot so much as free *themselves* from those *slavish Fears*, if they must

must be so called. But though a Man *can* SERM.
not be *sure* that *Christianity* is *false*, even XIN.
supposing it *were* false; yet he *may*, if he
pleases, be *sure* that it is *true*: The Argu-
ments for it being *demonstrative*, as has been
shewn a thousand times over. And being
so assured, and *living* accordingly, he will
make himself easy indeed: And 'tis impossi-
ble he should be so any *other* Way.

BUT our Unbelievers leave *Christ*, with-
out considering *to whom* they *should* or *can*
go. They talk indeed of *Natural* Reli-
gion, but in truth mean *no* Religion. They
extol *Reason*, and at the same time argue
contrary to it, while they make it their Bu-
siness to vilify *Revelation*. For *Reason* and
Revelation are very good Friends: *Reason*
proves the Truth of *Revelation*, and *Reve-*
lation assists and improves *Reason*. Even
the Religion and Morality of the ancient
Heathen, so far as it could approve itself to
right *Reason*, was in great measure owing
to *Revelation*: Either to an original one
given to our first Parents, and deliver'd
down by Tradition; or to the holy *Script-*
ures themselves, from which they had some

SERM. Notices, either by reading them, or by
XIV. their Conversation with *Jews*, or *Christians*,
or *both*. And these pretended *Rationalists*
of ours could not talk as they do of the
Beauty and Excellence of *Natural Religion*,
had they not borrow'd their Notions from
the *Bible*: Then they basely and ungrate-
fully turn those Arms which they stole *from*
it *against* the *Bible* itself. It may here be
worth while to observe, what *moral* Men
they are, while they talk so gravely about
Morality. Not to insist upon Lewdness and
Debauchery, for which many of them at
least are notorious, and to the Growth of
which the Principles of them all naturally
tend; where is their *Morality* in their Way
and Manner of arguing and writing against
Christianity? In gross fraudulent Quotations,
in misrepresenting the Sense of Authors
both Human and Divine; in the most ma-
licious Invectives against the whole Body
of the Clergy; in charging them with the
foulest Crimes, of which they know they
are innocent; in calumniating God's Mi-
nisters, and blaspheming God himself?
This is the *Morality* of a *Deist*; but sure-
ly

ly the *Morality* of a *Christian* is much better. SERM.
XIV.

THIS is an Inconsistency between their *Discourses* and their *Practice* in the very Management of them. But I shall now take notice of *another* in their *Discourses* themselves, or at least of a shameful Prevarication, and a most perfidious Abuse of Words, to deceive ignorant and unwary Readers. They make use of the Words *Christianity* and *the Gospel*, as we do; supposing, one would think, that there are such Things, and that they are good Things too: As when they say, *Christianity as old as the Creation*; or *the Gospel a Republication of the Law of Nature*, &c. And yet they lay down such *Maxims* as suppose there neither are, nor ever were any such Things, or manifestly tend to overturn and destroy them. For, however *ancient Christianity* may be, I ask, whether, as Things now stand, it be possible for it to subsist without the *Old and New Testament*? And whether, according to the *New Testament*, it be possible for it to subsist without those positive Institutions, as the *two Sacraments*, the Constitution of a *Church*, and the Offices
of

SERM. of *Ministers* in it, which are enjoin'd in the
 XIV. *New Testament*, and which our Adversaries
 ~~~~~ make their utmost Efforts to destroy; declaring that God, by his Laws, *cannot* make any *Addition* to the *Law of Nature*? Then, in their Argumentations upon this Head, they take no notice of *Original Sin*, and the *Redemption of Mankind* by the *Sacrifice of Jesus Christ*; upon which the *Scheme of Christianity* turns, and which are the *Grounds and Reasons* of those *positive Institutions*.

IT would be endless to remark upon all their Inconsistencies and Absurdities, or upon their Prevarications and fraudulent Dealings: Yet I shall just mention one or two more; and the rather, because the Detection of them will farther shew the Weakness and Insufficiency of something which they would resort to, after having deserted *Christ* and his Religion. They tell us the *native Beauty of Virtue* will do the whole Business of *Morality*, and so there is no Occasion for any *Revelation*. But, 1<sup>st</sup>, They are *inconsistent* with themselves: They extol the Loveliness of *Virtue*, and yet argue for and promote the Cause of *Vice*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, The *native Beauties of Virtue*, though undoubtedly

edly

edly very great, and acknowledged by All, SERM.  
are not sufficient to make Mankind virtu- XIV.  
ous, in this our miserably corrupted State.   
We find it to be so by Experience, and  
that can never deceive us. Those Beauties,  
even when aided and assisted, as they now  
are, by the Sanctions of Rewards and Pu-  
nishments, do not in fact make All, no nor  
the greatest Part of those who believe them,  
truly *virtuous*: How much less shall they  
do it of *themselves*!

THE *next* Thing they would set up in  
lieu of *Christianity*, and in Opposition to it,  
is *Honour*. This, if it be any thing, is a  
*faint Image* of *Virtue*, at best: Otherwise it  
is a mere *Phantom*, and a mere *Nothing*.  
Those who most pretend to *extraordinary*  
*Honour* make no Scruple of breaking through  
all the Ties of *common Honesty*. Such a  
Man will squander away his Estate in Luxu-  
ry, but will not *pay his Debts*, till he is  
forced to it; and that too by the Ruin of  
his Creditors: Except Debts contracted by  
*Gaming*; for those, it seems, are Debts of  
*Honour*. He will not *take the Lie*, but he  
will *tell a Lie*, or a thousand Lies, if he  
thinks his Purpose can be served by so do-  
ing.



SERM. ing. He will do nothing *dishonourable*, but  
 XIV. he will *murder* any Man who shall reflect  
 upon his *pretended Honour*, though never so  
*justly*; provided the Word *Duel* can be dex-  
 troussly applied to the Murder, so as to make  
 it, in the *Language of Honour*, no Murder  
 at all.

UPON the *Whole*, in Consideration both  
 of the Truth and Excellence of *Christianity*,  
 we had much better *adhere* to *Christ*, than  
*forsake* him. What good *Effects* has Infide-  
 lity produced in this Nation? Are we the  
*richer*, or in any Respect the *happier* for it?  
 Do our *Affairs* either *private* or *publick*, at  
*home* or *abroad*, succeed *more prosperously*,  
 since this *Deluge of Profaneness* has broken  
 in upon us? Does *Trade* thrive and flourish  
 more? Are *Children* more obedient to their  
*Parents*, or *Servants* to their *Masters*? Is  
*Self-Murder*, as well as all other Sorts of  
 Murder, less frequent? And cannot the same  
 be said of *Robberies*, *Burnings*, and *Violence*  
 of all Kinds? I have instanced particularly  
 in *private* Matters: I just mention'd indeed  
 something of *publick* ones. If those are (as  
 we are told they are) in the Height of *Pro-*  
*sp erity*, yet I absolutely deny that this *Hap-*  
 piness

piness is owing to *Infidelity*. 'Tis not *be-cause of*, but *notwithstanding* Infidelity; and it must be owing to some *other* Cause than *that*, whatever the Cause be. But whatever is to be said of these Matters, certain it is (as we have fully shewn) that upon the *Whole*, with regard both to *this* Life and the *next*, he is somewhat more than ordinarily mad, who (in the midst of so clear a Revelation) will go *back* from *Christ*, and walk no more with him.

To Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Glory, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. *Amen.*

*The END of the SECOND VOLUME.*



which is owing to light. The not less are  
 kind of, but not necessarily identical; and XIX.

it must be owing to some new cause than  
 that, whence the Cause has got what

over is to be left of these matters, certain

it is (as we shall see) that upon the

Whole, with this line and

the west, the than ordi-

narly me, who first to clear

a Revelation will be in Christ, and

will be seen, and so on.

To Him, with the Father and the Holy

Ghost, be ascribed, as almost due, all

Honor, Glory, Might, Majesty, and

Dominion, benediction and for ever-

more. Amen.

The End of the Second Volume.

